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Vol. VI. \$2.50
a Year.

Published Weekly by Beadle and Adams,
No. 98 WILLIAM ST., NEW YORK.

Price, No. 69,
Five Cents.

DETECTIVE DICK; or, The Hero in Rags.

BY CHARLES MORRIS,

"AUTHOR OF 'WILL SOMERS,' 'PHIL HARDY,' 'PICAYUNE PETE,' ETC., ETC."



DICK ON GUARD.

Detective Dick;

OR,

THE HERO IN RAGS.

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CHAPTER I.

A WARM INTERVIEW.

"LUCK? You kin bet your bottom dime on that. I've had a streak jist as big as a mountain."

"Hold yer hosses a bit, Dick. Good luck can keep sweet till we're ready to use it. It's bad luck that goes sour. I never talk business on an empty pipe."

The speaker—a middle-aged man, with thick, grizzled whiskers, and a face as rough as a chestnut-burr—produced a handsome meerschaum from his pocket, and proceeded to charge it with tobacco.

Dick sat, with a grim smile on his young face, curiously watching this process.

The pipe lit, his companion took two or three long whiffs, sending the smoke curling through the air, his face full of deep satisfaction.

"There. That's what I call comfort," he said.

"Now Dick, you can unload."

"Ain't in no hurry 'bout that," said Dick, grimly.

"Guess my luck 'll keep sweet a while longer."

"What do you mean, you blowed young rag doctor?" growled the man.

"Somehow I can't never talk bizness till I've had a puff," answered the boy, deliberately producing from somewhere in his odd apparel a half-smoked cigar. "S'pose you favor your uncle with a light."

The man looked half-angry for a moment; then, with a short laugh, he handed Dick his pipe.

Dick proceeded with great nonchalance, to light his stump of a cigar, and while doing so it will be a good time to introduce him to the reader.

He was a short, well-set boy, of apparently some sixteen years of age, though there was the worldly wisdom of a man in his not overly clean face. Dick laid no claims to beauty of countenance, but he had all the keenness of the genuine street boy. His dress was a conglomerate, seemingly made up of stray bits of cast-off clothing, and long since worn into rags.

"There," exclaimed Dick, handing back the pipe. "That's what I call comfort." He put his heels on the table, tilted back his chair to a dangerous angle, and poured out smoke from his lips till his head seemed enveloped in a cloud.

"Well, if you ain't a cool coon," declared the man, with a look of some admiration. "If he ain't got the impudence of Old Nick himself, then I'll rent out my head for lodgings."

"Dunno who you'd git to rent sich an empty old place as that," was Dick's provoking retort.

"I'll set on you after awhile, and mash you, sure as my name's Ned Hogan," with a touch of spleen. "You'd best dry up while your skin's whole. There's enough of this slack now; let's hear what you done. Did you see Harris?"

"I've got a ridick'lus whim that's the job I took in," and Dick fastened another button with great dignity. "When you find Dick Darling go back on his jobs you kin git out your mud-scrapers and scratch the river-bottom for him. I'm one of the kind that kin bear death but not disgrace."

"Ye'r a blamed long-winded, short-haired, knock-kneed, imperdent young son of a ship's monkey," growled Hogan, wrathfully. "And if you don't come to the point soon there'll be a death in the Darling fam'ly, without the trouble of your drownin' yourself."

Ned Hogan raised his short, sturdy figure from his chair, and laid down his pipe, as if this were his first movement toward putting his threat into execution.

"Thank you. Don't keer if I do, long as my Con-

cher's smoked out," said Dick, quietly picking up the pipe and inserting it between his lips. "There allers was something 'bout a genuine meerschaum that I liked."

He puffed away in seeming unconsciousness of the wrathful attitude of his companion, who stood as if overcome by this sublimity of impudence. Finally, with a short, savage laugh, he sunk again into his chair, exclaiming:

"I'll be shot if I don't b'lieve that boy would stop to argy the pint if there was a pile-driver comin' down on his head. Come, Dick, now, what did Harris say?"

"Oh! he wasted a good many parts of speech tryin' to argyfy into me that boys' tongues were only made for ornament; which, in course, didn't stand to reason. He guv me a letter, though, which I guess will come to the heel of it quicker nor I kin."

Dick laid down the pipe, which Hogan made haste to appropriate. Then followed a general unbuttoning and diving into multifarious pockets, with which Dick's apparel seemed plentifully supplied. A general assortment of boys' pocket merchandise adorned one corner of the table as Dick emptied pocket after pocket in his search.

"Well, if it don't beat bugs and butterflies!" he exclaimed, indignantly. "I know I sunk it in one of them pockets; and there ain't a pickpocket this side of Hong Kong could find a thing after it's once buried in my pockets. Can't find it myself half the time."

Dick took off his hat to scratch his head for an idea to help him out of the difficulty, when out dropped the missing letter, falling on the floor at Hogan's feet.

Dick looked down on it with an odd contortion of countenance.

"I'll sell my pet cat, if there ain't some sleight-of-hand about this," he protested, ruefully. "I see'd old Signor Blitz across the street. Bet he had a hand in puttin' that letter in my hat. Sich things don't do themselves."

Hogan paid little attention to the boy's mutterings as he picked up the letter and tore it open, evidently anxious to learn its contents.

Dick moved to the other side of the table, as if for defense against the gathering storm that showed itself in Hogan's countenance, and stood slyly eying the strongly-marked face of the man, as his eyes ran down the epistle.

There were mutterings and grumblings as of distant thunder, as he continued to read. Finally, with a sudden outburst of wrath, he slapped the letter violently down upon the table.

"May I be cantankerously smashed into tin sixpences, if this don't take the biggest rag off the littlest bush that ever I run across!" he ejaculated. "Oh! if you ain't a genius for bizness!" shaking his fist at Dick. "Lucky for you that the table's between us, if you think anything of your bones."

"What's wrong?" asked Dick, with childlike innocence of manner.

"What's wrong?" echoed Hogan, loudly. Then, suddenly lowering his voice, he asked: "Can you read?"

"Kin I read?" repeated Dick, indignantly. "I'd be a purty graduate of the No. 1 Keystone primary if I hadn't h'isted in that much eddication. Wonder if he takes me for a fresh emigrant?"

"Read that, then, and out loud. I want to see how it strikes you."

"All O. K., uncle," assented Dick, confidently, buttoning up his coat till he looked like a trussed turkey. "Don't find me goin' back on literatoor."

He crammed his hat down savagely on his head, spread the sheet of paper before him, shut his right eye and scratched his left ear, as if these were necessary preliminaries of dipping into literature.

"Filerdelfy, April one, eighteen hundred and—a blot," began Dick, with slow and emphatic manner. "Wonder if it ain't an April fool sell. Kinder looks like it."

"Go on," commanded Hogan, energetically.

"'Edward Hogan, Esq.' What's Esq.?"

"Go on."

Dick was no great success as a reader of manuscript, and it was with many a trip and stumble over the big words, which stood like tall stones in his way, that he made his slow journey down the rugged pathway of the letter.

"'Bus-i-ness is bus-i-ness' (wonder if he thinks we want to be told that); 'and what is worth doing at all is worth a man doing himself.' (That ain't good grammar. Should have said hisself)."

Hogan sat listening, with a smile of deep meaning.

"'In what high-way or by-way of in-solence you picked up the boy you sent me I'd like to know, for I don't believe such crooked crab-apples grow in every orchard.'

"Now who the dogs ever heerd of a crooked crab-apple?" demanded Dick, looking up from the letter.

Hogan made no answer but a grim smile.

"As for in-trust-ing any bus-i-ness of importance (guess big words is sold cheap in his country) to such a messenger, I would as soon put my hand in a hornets' nest after honey.' (That's fun. Tried it myself once. Kinder 'preciate your feelings there)."

"Blow me if it ain't like pouring water on a duck's back," growled Hogan. "I was fool enough to think there was some shame in the boy."

Dick seated himself before proceeding, leaning back, with his heels on the table, to the greater enjoyment of his literary task.

"'I asked him to tell me where you were living, and he asked me if I wanted to buy him for a dookey?' (Bet he could been bought cheap jist then.) 'Then I re-quest-ed to know his residence, and was informed that he lived at the corner of Goose and Spruce, next door to whale-bone alley.'"

"What did you tell him such stuff for?"

"Tweren't none of his bizness where I lived."

"'I was next-informed,' " continued Dick, "that the city I lived in wasn't fit for a respectable boot-black to emigrate to, and that it would do first rate to set up in a corner of a Philadelphia square as a specimen of a one-horse village."

"I tell you that fetched little Harris," Dick laughed, as if the recollection was highly agreeable. "He talked so big of the City of Chester, that I couldn't help puttin' in a back-handed slap."

"You seem to have distinguished yourself pretty generally," said Hogan.

"'I suppose these are enough il-lus-tra-tions' (don't reckernise the word) 'of his mode of conversation,' " continued the reader. "'I was silly enough to let him go on for an hour.' (Don't know how you'd stopped him). 'I certainly shall not trust important business to such a messenger. You know where I live, and have not informed me where you live. Come down and see me yourself. Yours truly,

"H. WILSON HARRIS."

"Short and sweet; with oceans of my imperdence, and not a word of his own," and Dick spoke indignantly.

"You're a high old messenger," said Hogan, sourly. "Do you know anything else?"

"Only that the schooner Lucy flung the hawser on Chester pier last night."

"The devil!" cried Hogan, rising so suddenly as to overturn his chair. "And he leaves the only bit of news worth a picayune to the last!"

He rushed hastily from the room, followed by an irritating laugh from Dick.

CHAPTER II.

THE SINGING LESSON.

HOGAN's hasty journey was to the telegraph office. Arrived there, however, he was not so hasty in sending his message, but spent full twenty minutes, with the aid of a pocket-dictionary, and a peculiarly cut piece of paste-board, in inditing it.

The clerk looked at it curiously, and then up at Hogan.

"Want this sent just as it reads?"

"Sart'in. And maybe you'd better run it over to see if it's writ out plain. Wouldn't do to get one of them words wrong."

"H. Wilson Harris, Chester, Penna," began the clerk.

"Chocolate, cows, corpulent, cucumbers, criminal, carter, cake, can, combine, calico."

"CHARTER."

"All correct. Hope it won't run to seed. Push her through, my friend. I expect an answer."

It was half an hour before the answer came. It was couched in the same cipher, which seemed to give Hogan more trouble to read than it had to write.

"Let me see," he muttered, "I told him to keep a spare eye for the Lucy, and especially for the red-haired mate. 'I judge this to be: 'I have been watching, but have seen nothing'—'cranberry,' what's that? Oh! 'suspicious.' 'Seen nothing suspicious.' 'Will keep my'—'curtain concert.' What the blazes is that?"

Hogan thumbed his book for several minutes, then ejaculated:

"'Eyes open!'—Keep my eyes open! Hope you will, Harris. Wish I was down there myself, but I've got to pay my compliments to our mutual friend, Harry Spencer."

Hogan had long since left the telegraph office, and was making his way as rapidly as a street-car could carry him to an up-town locality.

Arrived in front of a stylish row of houses on North Eleventh street, he was met, as if by pure chance, by a plainly-dressed man, who had been lounging carelessly on the nearest corner.

"What news?" was Hogan's first remark to this individual.

"All serene. The bird is caged yet. Wish to Heaven he'd show a wing."

"You are too uneasy, Tom. I hope you haven't sold your business?"

"Do you take me for a fool, Ned Hogan?" answered Tom, angrily. "I haven't been shadowing rascals for ten years not to know the first ropes yet."

"Been any signs?"

"A rusty-looking lad, that might have been a telegraph boy, went in half an hour ago. He ain't come out since. There was a very bright-faced young lady, too, went in an hour ago. She left just before you came."

"Bet on your having an eye for the ladies, Tom," laughed Hogan. "You can slide now. I'll take up the next watch."

They walked carelessly on together, Hogan filling his favorite meerschaum. He took a long, delighted puff at it, and then said:

"Be on hand at six, if nothing turns up before. I'll smoke him if he shows his nose."

Tom walked on, and Hogan turned on his heel, stationing himself in an indolent attitude against an awning-post, and smoking diligently as his eyes rested on the houses before him.

We will take the privilege of entering the particular house to which his attention was directed.

From the parlor of this rather plainly-furnished residence, a half-hour or so before Hogan took up his watch, there came the tones of a remarkably sweet lady's voice, accompanying the piano in what seemed more of an exercise than a song.

There mingled with it now the manly tones of a fine tenor voice, while more vigorous sounds came from the piano.

The young lady whose voice is so full of bird-like sweetness is a tall, beautiful girl, very stylishly dressed, a light-haired, blue-eyed witch, on whom the eyes of the gentleman are fixed in deep admiration.

He is a very handsome fellow, and has about him that ease and dignity of manner which seem to be the prerogative of culture. He is dressed rather plainly, but wears his clothes with an air that gives them all the effect of stylishness.

"That is well done—very well done," he says, ap-

provingly. "The range of your voice has increased within the last few weeks."

"Do you really think so?" she asked, pleased with his praise.

"Yes; you struck that upper note clearly to-day. Last week you could not sound it. I wish you to try this new song with me. It is a beautiful thing, and will just suit your voice."

"'Love Waits,' " reading its title with a shrug of her shoulders. "Something sweetly sentimental, I suppose. What is love waiting for?"

"Heaven knows. If I were a lover, now, I could tell you what I would be waiting for."

"For a smile from the sweetest eyes under the sun," she read, looking intently at the music.

"Let me see them," and laying his hand lightly on her arm, he peered earnestly into her face.

"Oh! no nonsense," she exclaimed, turning quickly away. "You are a mere tease."

Without a word he laid the music on the piano, and ran his hand softly over the air.

"Do you think you can catch it? It is easy."

"Sing it yourself first. I want to hear the movement."

He sung with a great deal of feeling and power, she listening with a charmed expression as the rich tones of his voice filled the room with music.

"She is as winsome as the summer rose,

Ah! false was he that painted love's eyes blind;
The stars are paled when those bright orbs uncloze;
Love waits no more when love's soft heart grows kind."

He was silent for a moment, the echoes of his voice seeming still to fill the room with music.

"Do you like the song?" he asked, quietly.

"Oh! indifferently," she answered.

"Will you try it now?"

"Not now. I thank you," coolly.

"The lesson is ended, then," shutting down the piano with almost a bang.

"Which lesson?" was her innocent inquiry, as her bright eyes rested a moment on his face.

"The music-lesson," he replied, rather curtly. "I was not aware that I was teaching any other lesson."

"Ah! true was he that painted love's eyes blind,"

she sung, with a laughing intonation.

She seized her music and turned toward the door.

He stood irresolutely, his face flushed, his foot nervously tapping the floor.

"You shall not go till you have told me what you mean," he declared, suddenly taking her hand.

"Why, you wished me to sing it a minute ago," with a quick glance. "I hope I caught the sentiment properly."

"But your paraphrase? Your change of my words?"

"Excuse me. That is one of the things no woman explains," withdrawing her hand resolutely from his grasp.

"One moment, Helen; I have dared to think—I have dared to hope—"

Yet he was not destined to finish his hesitating sentence.

The door near which they stood suddenly opened, and a boy, of the most unmitigated boyishness, stepped saucily into the room. It was no other than ragged, independent Dick Darling.

"Scuse me," he said, with a meaning glance from one to the other of the pair upon whom he had intruded. "S'pose, maybe, if I was to call ag'in, it mought be more agreeable. I'll retire to a sofy in the parlor till you git through."

"Stay where you are, you wicked young rascal," cried Mr. Spencer, laughing in spite of his chagrin.

"Shall I see you to the door, Miss Andrews?"

"Don't you mind me," suggested Dick, reassuringly. "I never peach, no matter what signs I see."

He seated himself on the piano-stool as they left the room.

"I'll be shot if they wasn't making love! I swow, if I ever see'd sich fun!" a broad smile breaking over

his face, as he brought his hand down for an emphatic slap upon his knee.

It fell, however, on the bank of keys of the piano, yielding such a clash of sound that the boy made a startled movement backward. The result was an overturning of the piano-stool, and a helpless rolling of Dick over and over upon the carpet.

"I wonder what blamed kind of a nitro-glycerine he keeps in that mahogany box!" he muttered, as he cautiously picked himself up.

Dick eyed it askance, as if not quite satisfied with its proximity.

"There he goes. In mischief before he is in the house five minutes," declared Mr. Spencer, as he paused near the front door.

"Who is he?" asked Miss Andrews.

"Oh! a young gentleman who has deigned to take me under his care, and who calls on me at the most inconvenient moments—rags and all."

"He is ragged enough," she admitted, with a shrug. "But I am intruding on your time."

Her voice was lowered in tone, as she stood a moment, her hand on the door knob, as if hesitating to open.

"When shall I see you again?" he asked.

"Oh! this day week, I presume; if nothing happens. Good-day," and she tripped hastily into the street.

His face had a very happy look, as he turned back from the door.

When he entered the room Dick was standing in the middle of the floor looking defiantly at the offending piano.

"What do you call that critter?" he asked, pointing to the instrument.

"That's a piano."

"Oh! that's a pianer, is it? Does it often go off?"

"It is a little dangerous to boys, sometimes," admitted Mr. Spencer.

"Now, what do you want? I have no time to spare."

"Come here to-day to tell you your fortune."

"I guess I will excuse you that duty, then," with a smile. "I have no fortune to tell."

"More than you think, maybe. Give me your hand."

Mr. Spencer extended his hand to the boy, who took it in his own soiled palm.

"The lines don't come out clear," he muttered, after poring over it. "Maybe you'd best cross it with silver."

Mr. Spencer laid a piece of silver in his open palm.

"That helps it amazingly," said Dick as he quietly pocketed the coin. "Tell you what, there's fun here; and there's danger. This line leads to trouble. There's a red-headed man in it. Best keep clear of red-headed men for the next month."

"Quick, boy; get done with this nonsense!"

"There's no nonsense in it," protested Dick, sturdily, poring more closely over the hand. "You were going to Chester to-day?"

"How under the sun did you guess that?" asked Mr. Spencer, in surprise.

"It's all here," declared Dick, slyly. "When you go there keep clear of a red-headed man. If sich a one wants to talk to you jist knock him down or vamoze. There's a plot here."

"This is some rascally nonsense," averred Mr. Spencer, drawing away his hand. "What do you mean by it all?"

"Don't you go to Chester. That's what I mean."

"I do not think I will give up my journey on account of your fortune-telling."

"There's danger, I tell you," spoke out Dick, earnestly. "There's a red-headed man there, mate of the schooner Lucy. You must keep clear of him. If such a chap wants to speak to you don't give him no closer quarters than you would a 'skeeter."

"What is it, Dick? What do you know?" demanded Mr. Spencer, impressed with the boy's earnest manner.

"Don't know half what I'd like to," answered

Dick. "Only know that the devil's got his foot loose, and got his eye on *you*."

"You are a strange customer. I shall beware of the red-heads. If you have no more business, Dick, my time is limited."

"All right!" said Dick, going to the front window, and looking into the street. "Is there an easy back way out of your house?"

"Yes. Why?"

"'Cause there's eyes in the front musn't see me, that's all. Do you know that this palatial mansion is shadded?"

"Shadowed! What is that?"

"Watched," explained Dick, mysteriously. "There's eyes on you that you won't easy fling off. Can't tell no more, but jist you beware."

In a few minutes more Dick was threading his way through back alleys, out of that neighborhood.

In a very short time after, Mr. Spencer left the house, and walked quickly down the street.

He cast a sharp glance around, but saw nothing more suspicious than a thick-set man leaning against a post and smoking a meerschaum.

CHAPTER III.

DICK GOES INTO BUSINESS.

Two gentlemen were seated in earnest conversation near the front window of a hotel room overlooking Arch street, Philadelphia.

One of them, a large, full-faced man, sat with his feet on the window-sill, in a remarkably easy attitude. The other was a small, delicately-framed man, who seemed to be greatly annoyed by some circumstance.

"Do you know, my dear boy, that we have so far been bamboozled? That's just the word for it—bamboozled," remarked the large man.

"A new ten-dollar issue on the market. The Pawkusset bank. It's deuced provoking," declared the small man. "And after six months' work we haven't the shadow of a clew."

"Oh! it will come. It will come," protested the other. "We have set things working, you know."

"I have never been so long in the dark in any case I ever took on in my life," said the testy gentleman.

"And we are looked to, to do something. Here is a gang of counterfeiters flooding the country with bad money under the very nose of the Government detectives. And it is no bungling work. I tell you. They are first-rate mechanics, and the keenest fellows I ever saw at hiding their trail. They are just shaming the whole Secret Service."

"Every dog has his day," declared the other, in his easy manner. "Let them alone. We have made ourselves too visible. We had better get back into the shadow and hide our hand. It sometimes pays to take to earth and only use your eyes."

"Yes, and let Pinkerton's men step in and take the game out of our bag," was the impatient reply. "I know they have scouts out. How would it sound to say that Will Frazer and Jack Bounce, the noted Secret Service officers, worked for half a year on a blind trail and then let themselves be pinked by Pinkerton. I shouldn't like to see that in print."

"Well, Jack Bounce, for one, don't care a fig," replied the large man, indolently shifting his feet. "If it comes to a free race between the detectives, the devil take the hindmost, that's my programme."

"You are a regular philosopher, Jack," confessed his comrade. "I don't know, though, that it makes you any worse at your business. I don't know when I was ever more ashamed of myself than about something that happened to-day."

"Ah! Let's hear it?" asked Jack.

"Do you know that I was accosted by an impudent young rascal in full street uniform—a cast-off coat and rags for breeches. He had my name pat, and my vocation, too, it seems. He had smelt our business here, and was going to put us on some wonderful track for only ten dollars. I was more inclined to give the young villain ten kicks. I never knew before that I carried my business in my face."

Before he got half-way through, Jack Bounce's feet were on the floor, and he was eying his comrade steadily.

"I didn't know that you valued ten dollars so highly."

"You know it wasn't the dollars."

"It looks devilish like it," was the vexed response. "You were out of temper. Will, or you wouldn't have let that boy off so easily. I should like to see him."

Will's reply was a sudden leap to his feet and rush to the window.

"There he is now!" he cried.

"And sees you," added Jack. "See, he is coming into the hotel. He has not given it up yet."

A few minutes passed in silent waiting. Then came a loud knock at the door.

"Come in!" he cried, resuming his easy attitude.

The door opened and in walked Dick Darling.

"Morning, gentlemen!"

"Come here, boy, and let's have a good look at you," called out Jack. "What is your name?"

"Dick Darling, or Darling Dick. I'm called both ways."

"And what are you after, to-day?"

Dick helped himself to a chair, and then answered:

"I'm arter that set of counterfeiters that's making things howl in the money market, and that's laughin' in their sleeves at Pinkerton's and the Secret Service."

"What do you know about it?" asked Bounce, his feet falling to the floor in his surprise.

"I know that Will Frazer and Jack Bounce, two of Uncle Sam's best men, have been smellin' 'round for months, and haven't found a bad egg in the basket yet. I know that Ned Hogan and his pals think they've got a scent, which won't work up worth a dime. And, finerly, I've got a stupid notion in my head that I see an openin' into the den of rascals."

"Ah! and what is your opening?"

"I wish you'd take a close look at my eyes, Mr. Jack Bounce, and see the color of them. If you can find any green there, then buy me cheap, that's all."

"What do you think of this fellow, Will?" asked Bounce, turning to his companion.

"I think he will never die from impudence striking in," Will answered.

"Maybe you and me can cry quits," retorted Dick, defiantly. "You took me for a sell yesterday; but you sold yourself. Now I'll give Mr. Bounce *his* chance. If he don't take—why, me and Ned Hogan knows one another; that's a word to the wise."

"What do you want, Dick?" asked Bounce, in a tone of amusement.

"I want ten dollars now, to begin on. And I want to be let alone. Them's two things. I won't promise that'll be my last draw. It takes rhino to push these jobs through."

"And what is our security for our ten dollars?"

"My face," looking Jack squarely in the eye. "If you can't see ten dollars wuth of honesty there, then we'll cry quits."

Dick rose from his chair and began buttoning his coat, his habitual action when he meant business.

"Of course it'll be sheer and sheer alike, in rewards, profits, and sich," he added, pausing a moment. "Do you take? If you do, fork over the needful. If you don't, why, don't be long about sayin' it."

"Strictly to the point, Dick, eh?" said Jack, laughing. "Come, my lad, I shouldn't wonder if you did smell a rat somewhere. Guess I won't mind risking a ten on your personal security."

He took a bank-note from his pocketbook, and handed it to the boy in his easy, careless manner.

Dick examined it with the eye of a connoisseur.

"Well, do you think it crooked, eh?"

"Thought maybe it might be one of the new edition," said Dick, honestly. "I don't trust detectives too far."

Jack Bounce laughed heartily with an amusement which was not shared by his companion.

"You mought lose your cash," added Jack. "I've only got a pin-hole to see through, so far, but I've a notion that I can see a mighty long ways through it; and a thunderin' pile of rascality at the end. I'll telegraph when I want your help."

With a dignity that would have done him credit in a stage tragedy, Dick stalked from the room, not deigning a glance behind.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SELLER SOLD.

THE boy had designs on the ten-dollar bill which had hardly been contemplated by the giver. His next appearance is in a South street second-hand clothing establishment, surrounded by a plentiful array of "old clo'" which had experienced regeneration, so far as their sins of the body would admit.

The proprietor, a cadaverous-looking gentleman, whose well-hooked nose seemed the larger portion of him, came bustling forward to where Dick had planted himself firmly on his sturdy legs, and was surveying the stock in trade with the eye of a critic.

"What can I do for my young friend to-day?" asked the storekeeper.

"Got any cutaways and sich?" asked Dick.

"I've got a beautiful assortment here," the Jew declared, eagerly. "I know I can fit you out and make a regular little gentleman of you. What shall I show you?"

"Give us a squint at that short-tailed beaver."

The dealer brought down the coat indicated, handing it with a look of intense admiration.

Dick put on the coat which was the very reverse of the one he usually wore. The tails reached but little beyond his waist, and it looked like a roundabout which had undergone a partial process of development into a frock-coat.

"Come here. This way. To the glass," suggested the Jew, hustling Dick eagerly before a very small square of mirror.

"Mought pass if the price was agree'ble. What's the plunder?"

"That coat ought to bring not a penny less than ten dollars, and dog-cheap at that, for such a piece of cloth."

"Cheap at that, eh? What price mought it be dear at?" asked Dick, sarcastically.

The Jew held up his hand with a sickly smile.

"Well, if he ain't a droll one!" he exclaimed.

"Take a squint at that bit of broadcloth, Solomon," and Dick picked up his own old coat. "Jest look at that elegant garment. Observe the button-holes, and the nap. Git your optical organs on the style. See here, Sol, I'll make a trade with you. What'll you give to boot?"

"What! for that dilapidated old—"

"Don't run that coat down now. It's stuck by me through sun and rain. You mought be glad to git a faithful old piece of broadcloth like *that*. It only wants some scourin', and a stitch or two."

The Jew examined it all over with the eye of an artist.

"Give me five dollars and I'll trade," he said, at length.

"Here you are, Sol," and Dick pulled out a two-dollar bill. "Say the word on the nail, quick as greased lightnin'. Got biz on hand, and can't stand palaverin' with you."

"Four dollars. And that's a great fall," responded the Jew, decidedly.

"Here's your old antiquity then," cried Dick hastily stripping off the coat. "Hand over my Japanese broadcloth."

"Make it three," conceded the Jew, as he saw Dick walking briskly to the door.

"Two. And that's the last word," responded Dick, decidedly, as he emerged into the street.

"Come back," groaned the Jew. "I can't bear to see you leave such an elegant fit behind you. But, I'll be ruined entirely if I make many such sales."

"Oh, yes! you are a generous-hearted old cuss," and Dick resumed the coat, and passed over his two dollars. "The city ought to make up your losses. You're a charitable old beat, you are." And with a smile of contempt Dick left the store, proud at heart of his new attire.

"Well, if I ain't done the Jew. Didn't think old Solomon would bite at such a gudgeon as *that*. It's enough to make a chap feel proud he's a human, to sell that skinny old penny-squeezer. I feel jist one foot higher."

And laughing repeatedly to himself at thought of his great bargain, Dick progressed through the classic precincts of South street, entering store after store, and picking up new cheap articles of apparel at ruinous prices, until he emerged like a butterfly in spring array, and minus five dollars in pocket.

"Guess I'm gay and lively now. Fine feathers make fine birds."

Dick took his way to the vicinity of a large stationery establishment on Chestnut street above Eighth. Here he was seized with a desperate attack of lounging, and spent several hours with no other apparent purpose than to display himself in his new spring suit to the fashionable denizens of that locality.

Yet it might have been noticed that he paid his regards to the store in question so closely that not a soul entered it without passing under the ordeal of his eyes. Not until the store closed for the night did Dick cease his task of espionage.

The next morning found him on his post again, and though hour after hour passed he never strayed beyond easy eye-shot of the paper-selling establishment.

Yet Dick was not without his sources of entertainment. One of these was the pulling of a torn envelope from his pocket, and looking through the paper toward the sun.

He always returned it to his pocket with the remark:

"There's riches in that. That bit of paper is *my* end of the trail. Wish my chap would come. It's past dinner-time, and I'm gettin' holler."

His wish was speedily gratified by the entrance of a person to the stationery-store whose appearance gave Dick a sudden start. In a minute more he was across the street and had entered the store behind this person, a tall, handsome, well-dressed man.

"Have you the paper ready which I ordered last week?" he asked, of the proprietor.

"Yes, sir," replied the latter, proceeding to get it, while his customer quietly waited.

"Is it the Gordon Mills paper, as I ordered?"

"Certainly, sir. You may see the water-mark," holding up a sheet before his eyes.

"What will you have?" asked a salesman of Dick.

"Got any nice note-paper, with double D. for a monygram?"

"I can let you have it with D."

"I want double D. or nothing," said Dick, possibly.

"I can have it made for you."

"Can't wait. The 'stablishments I deal with all keep double D's. Didn't know this was a one-horse retail concern, or wouldn't paternized you," said Dick, walking out with great dignity.

The gentleman with his package of paper had just left the store, and Dick kept his eyes intently on him as he followed him rather closely.

Passing up Chestnut street he came, near Tenth street, face to face with Miss Andrews, whom Dick at once recognized as the pupil in the singing-lesson he had interrupted.

The gentleman nodded familiarly to her as he passed, a fact of which Dick made a mental note as he continued his close pursuit.

The line of pursuit soon left Chestnut street, and followed less frequented streets in an up-town direction.

The gentleman walked along in an easy, careless

manner, occasionally pausing to glance in a window, or casting a quick look behind him.

He turned at length into an unoccupied by-street, through which he more slowly proceeded.

Near the further end of the street he entered a narrow alley, Dick hurrying up lest he should lose sight of his prey.

What was his astonishment, however, on arriving opposite the alley, to find himself in a tight grasp, and the face of the gentleman looking sternly down on him.

"You young villain! You've followed me now from Chestnut street. If I am not mistaken, you were in the store where I got my paper. What you are after the Lord only knows, but if I catch your dirty face at my heels a square further I'll leave you in a condition to be carried home on a shutter." And loosing Dick with a contemptuous shove, the gentleman walked on.

"Look here, mister," called Dick, after him. "how many of the streets 'bout these diggin's mought you own? Seems somehow a feller's got to ask you what streets he kingo through."

The gentleman walked on, without answering this home-thrust.

"Bet I had him there," thought Dick. "That's as good a sell as I got on old Sol. Wonder what rent he'd take for a foot or so of pavement."

The joke seemed so good that he broke into a laugh, slapping his knee heartily in its enjoyment.

A most unexpected result occurred. A sound of ripping cloth was heard, and the new coat split in the back from shoulder to waist.

It was a most rueful face that Dick wore when he put his hand back and discovered the nature and extent of the accident.

"I'll be fizzled for a salt mackerel if old Sol didn't sell me, after all!" he ejaculated. "Guess I'd best go back, like a blamed young fool, and trade even up for my old ulster."

Recollection of his pursuit returning, Dick looked up quickly. The gentleman had disappeared. He ran hastily to the next corner. In vain; there was no such person anywhere in sight.

CHAPTER V.

THE RED-HAIRED STRANGER.

To Harry Spencer, whom we left on the verge of his trip to Chester, on an errand which we have so far but vaguely outlined, the mysterious communication of Dick Darling had not been without its effects, despite his seeming disregard of it.

His acquaintance with this young gentleman had been rather romantic in its character, and one calculated to give him confidence in Dick's good intentions.

It had commenced by his saving the boy from a severe drubbing with which Dick was threatened by some of his associates. Dick was just then spoiling for a fight, and had stirred up a state of active war among his companions from which he seemed likely to emerge badly defeated.

Harry Spencer had witnessed this affray—and taken such active part in it as to rescue Dick from his assailants, with no deeper wounds than a black eye and a bleeding nose. This assistance the boy had construed into an alliance, offensive and defensive, and he had since done his new friend more than one service from a sheer sense of gratitude.

"The boy is shrewdness itself," Harry mused, as he sat in the car of the railroad leading south from Philadelphia. "This stuff of the fortune telling is only one of his oddities. He knows something which he does not wish to divulge, and takes this ridiculous way of warning me of some danger. As to my house being watched, that I can hardly believe. I certainly saw no one but a common-looking man clouding himself in the smoke of a huge pipe. I hardly fancy that he had any ulterior designs."

Yet this common-looking man, with that innocent pipe in his pocket, was at this moment in the same car with his unconscious prey.

He took a letter from his pocket and read it carefully, replacing it again with an air of much satisfaction.

This action was imitated by Harry Spencer, who also produced a letter, which he pored over intently, his face expressive of great uncertainty.

He read the letter over again, carefully considering every word.

"If you would hear of something very greatly to your advantage," he read, "you will be in the city of Chester at three o'clock in the afternoon of April 10th. You will find the writer of this in Morgan's restaurant at that hour, seated at a side table. Address the person with a green sprig in his button-hole. Don't fail, if you value wealth and honor."

"YOUR FRIEND."

"Is he my friend?" asked Harry, dubiously. "It would be no new event for a wolf to wear sheep's clothing. I must bear myself very discreetly in this business."

He saw new reason for doubt on his arrival at the depot in Chester.

He took his way leisurely down the main street of the town, examining with a curious eye the obvious strife between antiquity and the modern spirit of innovation which here plainly displayed itself.

Turning into James street, he soon saw the sign he had been looking for, "Morgan's Restaurant," glaring in great gilt letters above the front of a rather narrow store.

Harry paused a moment irresolutely at the door, gazing absently up the street. In the distance he caught sight of a thick set man, who vaguely reminded him of the man of the pipe. This person had just reached the main street, into which he turned.

"Another false alarm," thought Harry, smiling. "I wish Dick had not put such nonsense into my head. I will be seeing something suspicious in my own shadow next. Well, here goes. The quickest way to get over the fear of cold water is to plunge in."

He opened the restaurant door and entered.

A glance showed him the state of affairs within. It was a narrow, long room, containing some dozen of tables, three or four of which only were occupied. Avoiding any attention to these persons Harry gave an order for some slight refreshment, and seated himself at a table near the front, looking down the room.

He sat idly playing with a spoon, and carelessly eying the persons present. Two of these were apparently a young man and his sweetheart, who were enjoying their ice-cream as if luxury was just then a far more substantial thing than love.

There was one other person present, in the lower end of the room, who was quietly enjoying a substantial plate of roast beef, and whose eyes had been fixed on Harry ever since his entrance.

He was short, slightly built, and with a thin, light-complexioned face, lit up by keen gray eyes. There were two main particulars, however, which Harry chiefly saw in him. One of these was a green leaf at the lapel of his coat. The other was a plentiful display of hair of a decided reddish tinge.

Harry gave a slight involuntary start at this discovery, the warning of his queer young friend returning to him with convincing force.

"Dick knew more than he would reveal," he thought, as he bent his eyes resolutely on his plate. "There is certainly something wrong. I shall have nothing to do with this man."

His mind thus made up he quickly rose, and paying for what he had ordered, left the saloon.

Yet he had not taken ten steps outside before he was accosted by a strange voice.

"Excuse me, Mr. Spencer," was the remark thus heard. "May I have a minute's conversation with you?"

He turned to behold the red-haired man of the saloon.

"I do not know where you learned my name, sir," he coldly replied. "You are a stranger to me."

"I know more of you than you are aware," returned the stranger, politely. "My object in this interview is entirely your own advantage, not mine."

"I wish no advantage from you, sir," said Harry, walking on decidedly. "Nor do I care to prolong this conversation."

The stranger gave a quick glance backward. Not ten feet behind them was visible the form of Harry's persistent pursuer, who was lounging along as if the shop-windows were his only aim in life.

A queer smile came upon the spare face of the man, as he again said:

"Suppose I desire to tell you something about that which has been the great aim of your life? Suppose I know something concerning that strange mystery of your parentage? Would my communication be then of no interest to you?"

Harry turned sharply upon him.

"What do you know about it?" he demanded.

"You are entirely too energetic, my dear sir," replied the other. "I know much more than you imagine."

"And what is your object in appointing this interview? If you have such information, what do you expect to make by it?"

"Of course if I should assist you to wealth, for instance, I should expect to be remembered," said the man, smiling. "I never did anything for pure love. Certainly ten minutes' talk with me won't hurt you. Step here into Price's for ten minutes only."

Harry followed.

It was nearer a half-hour than ten minutes when he emerged into the street, leaving the red-haired man behind him. The first person he saw there was no other than the man of the meerschaum, who seemed deeply interested in the movements of a fish-woman.

The man paid no seeming attention to him. He waited until Harry had got some distance up the street, and then turned and entered the hotel.

Looking sharply around, he soon caught sight of the red-haired man, who was seated at a table, quietly sipping a glass of ale, and examining some loose papers. He looked up with an odd expression at the entrance of Ned Hogan, for it was really he. But the stranger paid no further attention to him.

Hogan stood undecided for a minute, then called for and drank a glass of liquor, and left the saloon without speaking to the stranger.

"Guess I'd best not break the ice till it's froze harder," he mused. "Harry Spencer's nailed if I ain't badly sold. I must see Harris."

He soon turned from the street into an office that had for sign:

"H. WILSON HARRIS, *Attorney-at-law*."

The occupant, a short, dapper personage, glanced up at Hogan with a look of recognition.

"I have been expecting you. Take a chair."

"Anything new turned up?" asked Hogan, as he threw himself into a chair. "How about the Lucy and the red-haired mate?"

"He is living very quietly at Price's. He seems to have no business and to know nobody. His time is spent in lounging about the town."

"And the Lucy? Anything mysterious about her? Any sort of cargo landed?"

"Nothing. She lay quietly at the wharf for a day or two. She has been gone—"

"Gone! The deuce!" exclaimed Hogan.

"No, the Lucy," quietly replied Harris.

"Where did she go?"

"She slipped out between two suns. Nobody knows when or where."

"What kind of a vessel was this Lucy?"

"A one-masted vessel. Not very large, or very new."

"An old sloop. And that's all you know about her? You've got a better eye for a law-paper than a vessel, Mr. Harris. I bet I'll find some old river salt on the pier who will tell me all about her."

"That may be," admitted Harris, as Hogan rose to go. "Look for old Mr. Pike. He sees everything down that way."

Hogan made his way quickly to the main wharf of the town, on whose verge stood the old Steamboat tavern, a revolutionary relic of the past.

On the porch of this edifice stood a tall, straight, grizzled old man, with his eyes fixed on the river.

"How is my old friend, Pike?" asked Hogan, vigorously clapping his hand. "Anything new stirring hereabouts? Any new craft in, or the like?"

"Nothing but a sloop that crept in a day or two ago and crept out ag'in last night."

"What kind of a looking craft?"

"A very rakish build. Very low down amidships. Painted black, with a red streak. Carried a heavy show of canvas. Should say she was built for a yacht, and has grown old in service."

"Did she land anything?"

"I did hear of some things being taken off of her at midnight. Joe Bower happened to be prowling around. What's the matter? Anything wrong?"

"No. Which way did she go?"

"Up the river."

"Thank you, Mr. Pike."

After a few words more of desultory conversation, Hogan left the old river-dog and made his way back into the town.

CHAPTER VI.

HELEN ANDREWS'S TWO VISITORS.

It was with great amusement that Harry Spencer beheld a spectacle which the reader has already seen. It was no other than that of a half-grown boy who closely resembled a locust in the act of shedding its skin.

For his short, tight coat was split down the back, from shoulder to waist, the gaping wound revealing a plentiful display of dingy shirt.

Dick Darling, for it was he, turned with a rueful face that brightened somewhat on seeing Harry.

"Why, what under the sun has happened?" asked the latter, laughing.

"Is my coat torn?" Dick asked, as if he had just discovered something wrong.

"Badly demoralized, Dick. But where did you get such a spruce rig? I never saw you dressed so much like a dandy before."

"It's a bran-new suit," protested Dick, with some pride. "Bought it from Sol Sly, a South-streeter. Reckon he thinks he's sold me as well as the coat. Shouldn't wonder if I'd pay my 'spects ag'in to that individual. Got a pin?"

Dick had off the obnoxious coat and was striving to pin together the gaping seam. Harry supplied him with a pin or two more, with the aid of which he drew together the greater part of the rip.

"Bet I'll square with old Sol for this," he declared as he carefully introduced himself again into the dubious garment. "If I don't, sell me for a fried oyster. But, there's somethin' I want you to tell me."

"All right. Let me hear what it is."

"I s'pose you recollect a sort of good-lookin' young gal that takes singin' lessons from a Mr. Spencer that I know?"

"Suppose I do? What then?"

"Only I've got some private bizness with that angel, that's all. Want to know where she lives?"

"What business can you have with her?"

"Oh! private. 'Tain't none of yourn. Don't calculate to mention your name."

"I am afraid the young lady may not thank me for sending her Dick Darling as a visitor."

"Don't you worry your cranium 'bout that."

"Well, here are her directions," and Harry wrote down an address on a card. I can't imagine what business you can have with her."

"Your 'magination ain't very profuse. Didn't take my warnin'. Went to Chester and see'd the red-haired man, spite of all."

"How under heaven can you know that?" demanded Harry, in great surprise.

"Know more than that," confessed Dick, turning on his heel to leave. "Hope it won't git you into trouble, but I'm afeard it will."

Dick walked away after delivering this oracular sentence, but turned to add:

"Jist you keep your eye skinned, Mr. Spencer. Ther'll be the devil to pay if you ain't sharp as a new razor. Can't say no more."

Harry stood for minutes in deep wonder as to what lay behind all this mysterious warning.

We will precede Dick in his visit to the young lady whose directions he had thus obtained.

Miss Andrews lived in a fine mansion on Spruce street—the residence of her father, a prosperous merchant.

Dick had been preceded in another manner, undreamed of by him. For the gentleman who was so earnestly conversing with Miss Andrews in the parlor was no other than he whom the boy had lately followed, and in pursuit of whom he had been so signally discomfited.

Mr. Andrew Williamson, the gentleman in question, was a tall, rather stout person, handsome in face, a full brown mustache shading his well-formed mouth, while his eyes were small, dark and somewhat shifting in expression.

He stood grasping a chair with a hand that closed on the wood as if it would crush it.

Opposite him Miss Andrews sat easily on a sofa, a little tinge of amusement on her face.

"Now, do be seated, Mr. Williamson," she insisted. "You will certainly hurt my poor chair if you close your fingers upon it in that energetic fashion."

"And you did not mean a word you have said?" he asked, releasing the chair he had been unconsciously grasping. "It is only some of your humor?"

"My humor!" she replied, holding up her hands in affected horror. "That is the first time I have been accused of anything so unfashionable."

"You are disposed to be witty, at my expense," with a darkening look upon his face. "But enough of this. Will you please explain which of us, I or the music-teacher, is the one whom you are pleased to flirt with?"

His tone showed that he was too indignant to consider how far he might be injuring himself by these words.

"I hardly think that Mr. Spencer will ever have reason to accuse me of flirtation," she replied, with a fierce glance at the speaker.

"Do you know who Harry Spencer is?" he demanded, growing cool as she grew excited.

"I know that he is a gentleman."

"There is something besides polite behavior required to make a gentleman."

"As what, for instance?"

"As birth, for instance."

"Oh! Then he is of no family?"

"It would be difficult for him to tell. If you should like to know, just ask him who was his father."

She seated herself, or, rather, dropped into a chair, looking up at him with scared eyes.

"Will you be kind enough to change the subject?" with a flush of crimson on her cheek.

"If you will but let me return to our former subject? If I have not offended you too deeply."

"Perhaps you had best not recall your offenses," she answered, with flashing eyes.

"Now you are angry, Helen. I am sorry, indeed I am, that I have no better control over myself. Jealousy has made a fool of me, as of better men. Will you not forgive the fault which love counsels? Will you not—"

He paused as she turned away with what he seemed to think a contemptuous gesture. He was mistaken in this; it was a step outside the door which had attracted her. She was agitated as she rose to answer a knock upon the door.

"There is a young gentleman here wishes to see you a minute, Miss Helen," the servant explained.

"You will excuse me, Mr. Williamson?"

"Certainly," with a smile that grew deep and subtle as the door closed upon her.

"I have a fancy that I have checkmated Spencer. She is but a fluttering bird, and I know well where her nest will be."

Helen had walked quickly to the room where her visitor was awaiting her. With surprise she saw the shrewd face of Dick Darling.

"Do you wish to see me?"

"Well, that's about what brung me here," he answered, stretching himself out in a chair. "Got a minute's worth of bizness."

"What do you wish with me?" she demanded impatiently.

"Does it come back to your recollection that you nodded to a certain person, say about Eleventh and Chestnut, about two o'clock this afternoon?"

"I remember doing so," she answered, after a moment's thought.

"That's jest to the mark," declared Dick, excitedly. "I want the name of that certain person. Likewise where he hangs out. Moreover, who he is."

Dick seemed quite proud of his lawyer-like way of putting it. He was slightly taken aback, however, by her reply.

"Is that all?"

"That's all."

"Then I decline to give you any information in regard to that certain person," with an involuntary smile at Dick's manner.

"You ain't goin' back on me that way?"

"I believe you said that was all your business?"

"About all," resignedly. "All I've got to say is that you're harborin' a rascal. Harborin's jist the word, miss. A reg'lar out-an' outer of a rogue."

"You have nothing more to say?"

"I think I've said 'bout enough," rising and walking toward the door.

Despite her indignation she could not help laughing as he turned his back, at the peculiar aspect of his new coat.

Somewhat emboldened at this, Dick turned and added:

"Hope you won't take it ag'in' me, miss. Jist take this last shot. If you know this chap, drop him like a hot potater, and you'll git off without burnt fingers."

Instead of returning to the parlor Helen went slowly to her own room, sending her excuses to Mr. Williamson by a servant. She wished time to reflect upon the two strange charges she had just heard.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LUCY'S TWIN SISTER.

NED HOGAN, back from his visit to Chester, is again seated behind his favorite meerscham in the room where we first met him.

Stretching himself out easily he takes the pipe from his lips and lays it temporarily upon the table, while his hand goes on an exploring expedition into his pocket.

"I don't know that I've got an ounce of proof positive," he muttered, as he drew from its receptacle a well-thumbed letter. "Tracked him to Chester well enough. Seen his interview with the red-haired chap, too. That's correct as far as it goes, but how do I know but this is a sell?"

He opened the letter and again read it. After the address it read as follows:

"If you would gain a clew to that mysterious gang of counterfeiters, who have been setting the detectives at defiance, you will follow these directions. There will, two days from the date of this letter, put into the port of Chester a small sloop called the Lucy. She belongs to the gang in question, and will leave there one of her officers, a red-haired, thin-faced man. She will also land certain materials of the counterfeiters, with the purpose of continuing their operations in that locality. A young

man named Harry Spencer, of 1084 North Eleventh street, is connected with the gang. If you want to discover their movements you had best shadow him, for he will go at once to Chester and have an interview with the red-headed man referred to. If you wish to learn more, you will find in his house a supply of counterfeit bank-notes, and also information which may put you on the track of his confederates.

A FRIEND."

"A friend to who, that's the mystery. Sartain he's no friend to Spencer. He mought want to hurt him. It's true things come out just as he says. But then, there's nothing to show that the sloop, or Mr. Redhead, had anything to do with the gang. Hope Harris will track his man and the Lucy's cargo into some port of entry. I'm curious about that sloop. Maybe Dick may fetch her."

He had hardly thought this ere the person named entered the room, with his usual free-and-easy air. Hogan looked at him in surprise.

"Well, I'll be swigged!" he exclaimed, "if the boy ain't changed his skin. What's happened to the back of your coat?"

"Was down at the menagerie, and tried a back somerset over an elephant's back. Went over and didn't touch a hair. But it were a leetle too much of a strain on my new raglan."

"Maybe it was some such lie as that swelled you out and bu'sted your outfit," suggested Hogan, resuming his pipe. "Been along the wharves?"

"I hev," quietly.

"Seen anything?"

"'Bout a couple of ounces or so."

"What sort?"

"Seen the Lucy!" proudly. "Jist as sure as cheese is made of sour milk. She's changed her coat, though, and dropped her name. It's the Molly now."

"The Molly, hey!" "Where does she lie?"

"At Poplar street wharf."

"All right, boy. I'll pay my respects to the newly-christened young lady," promised Hogan.

"Spect to make anything out of her?" queried Dick.

"She belongs to the gang, Dick. She'll bear watching."

"And do you s'pose this gang is goin' to sell themselves out as cheap as *that*? It's my notion there's some deeper game in that letter."

"It may have come from some one who is turning traitor to the counterfeiters."

"It didn't do nothin' of the sort," protested Dick, positively. "That feller that wrote this letter knowed he'd put you on the track of the Lucy, and wanted to throw you off ag'in. He weren't no traitor, then, and he's got some game you don't see. I'll bet a cow he's tryin' to hurt Mr. Spencer."

"I have thought of that," admitted Hogan. "Wish I had took hold of the red-haired man."

"Don't you do it," expostulated Dick, rising. "It'll pay best to watch him. I'll go a peanut 'gainst a persimmons that Chester bizness is only a blind."

"You're a shrewd imp, Dick."

"I kin see a hole through a ladder. I'm goin' down now to see the chap as sold me this coat, and sold me wuss than the coat. I've a notion to guv him a piece of my mind."

"Good-by, Dick. Draw it mild, my boy. It's all in the way of business, you know."

Dick walked leisurely out, saying to himself:

"You're a smart chap, Ned Hogan, but you won't catch these birds in *your* spring-trap. And them Government detectives ain't as near the game as you! I'm goin' for them makers of the queer and slippers of the sly, I am."

He took from his pocket the torn envelope he had before used, and looked through it at the sun. He then replaced it in his pocket with an air of great satisfaction.

"That's the sauce for their mutton," he said, confidently.

Ten minutes afterward Dick burst into old Sol's clothing establishment with the air of a boy that meant business. He was arrested in his object, however, by an unexpected incident.

The Jew was engaged in earnest conversation with a gentlemanly-dressed person. They both looked round at Dick's abrupt entrance, and he saw to his surprise, that this gentleman was no other than the man whom he had so unsuccessfully tracked.

He had also overheard something interesting.

"I put it in a place," Sol had declared, "where a child's eye couldn't miss it."

"Look here, old Sol Sly," cried out Dick, anxious to appear not to have noticed these words, "do you call this a coat to sell to a gentleman of my standin' in s'clety?"

"I must be going now," remarked Mr. Williamson, with only a casual glance at the boy. "You will send the things round to my house?"

"Certainly," answered the Jew, in a tone that seemed to Dick somewhat nervous.

"That's a blind," thought Dick to himself.

"And now, my dear young friend, what can I do for you to-day?" demanded Sol, returning from the door.

"That's a high old cove to be callin' on *you*, old feller. I've see'd him of'en, but never knowed his name. What do you call him?"

"Mr. Williamson," answered Sol, quietly.

"In bizness?" asked Dick.

"He has an office at fourth and Walnut. But what does my young friend want to-day?"

"Got more than I 'spected," said Dick to himself.

"Guess I can let up some on you."

"Just take an observation of that coat," offering himself for inspection.

"You have been doing something to that coat," asseverated Sol.

"Of course I have," retorted Dick. "I've been bu'stin' it."

"It's your own fault. I told you the coat was too tight and was a trifle tender in the seams."

"Is that the first lie you ever told?" asked Dick, sarcastically. "If you calkerlate to shet up my eye, and then choke me off with that kind of logic, you're barkin' up the wrong tree, that's all."

"It is only the seam that has ripped," pleaded Sol, nervously. "That can easily be sewed up."

"Ain't takin' in plain sewing for a living. Guv me my own coat back, an' you kin stitch up your own rippin's."

The Jew seemed disposed to accommodate Dick, or to be a little afraid of him, and began to show him other articles of apparel. Then ensued a scene of dickering which the reader will forgive our troubling him with. It ended in Dick's procuring another coat several degrees further gone than the one he had brought back, but having the advantage of being a much looser fit.

"Guess I'm spruce *now*," and Dick made a bee-line for F'urth and Walnut. "Want to find out instanter if Sol told the truth."

His search was not a long one. In one of the buildings, that seemed overflowing with office-renting tenants, he soon discovered a door having on it a sign to this effect:

"ANDREW WILLIAMSON, Attorney-at-Law."

"That's a good day's work," thought Dick. "Guess I've druv more than one nail to the head. Best go home now and get some grub."

And he ended a hard day's work with a not very luxurious supper.

CHAPTER VIII.

HARRY SPENCER'S VISITORS.

"Now don't nobody bother me fur an hour, more or less," commanded Dick Darling, letting himself down gingerly into a chair that was doing its best to maintain a dignified position on three legs.

Before him was a table of the most venerable aspect, on which he had carefully deposited a sheet of paper and a bottle of ink.

"What are you up to now?" demanded a woman, who was bustling about the room. "You are always after some nonsense."

"I guess the feller as gits this dockymment won't call it nonsense," returned Dick, with much dignity. "I'm goin' to let out a little of my eddication, and I hope he'll only enjoy it."

"Going to write a letter, Dick?"

"You've hit it there, Aunt Sally. I don't do much that way. But it's me fur all that."

Dick dipped his pen into the inkstand and spread himself for work.

It was no light labor he had undertaken, to judge by the immense pains he expended upon every word, and the air of triumph with which he finished every satisfactory sentence.

He traveled on half-way down the sheet, finishing with a grand flourish over the signature, "Richard Darling," leaning back and complacently regarding his work.

"Wonder if he'll understand it? Maybe I'd best put it Dick."

With some little difficulty he read the letter over to himself.

It ran somewhat in this vein:

"DEER SUR:—'Spected to got a purtunity to run across you, but reckun I best rite. Thar's blazes to pay, so mind yer i. Ther's them arter you as will make things lively. You've an enemy, sur. Can't say no more; but jist hunt your hous' fur a bunch of countherfeet. Some chap's been slipin' the sly on you. Ther's offesurs on yer track. Burn the countherfeet quicker'n lig'tning, or ther'll be thunder to pay. RICHARD DARLING."

Dick sealed his letter and carefully directed it.

We must follow his letter to its destination in the hands of Mr. Harry Spencer, to whom it was directed.

"I do not know what could have kept Helen from her lesson," he says, gloomily, rising from his chair, and pacing the floor with a discontented air. "She never missed before, and she surely should have sent some explanation."

His rapid walk was brought to a close by a quick ring at the door-bell.

"Can this be my missing pupil now?" he murmured, with a glad expression. "Yet it sounds more like the postman's ring."

It proved to be the postman, with Dick's letter. He looked at it curiously, from side to side, not knowing quite what to make of the address.

"This is not what you would call a cultivated hand," he remarked, as he tore open the envelope.

With a look of utter bewilderment he read the epistle, which task was not very easy accomplished, Dick's writing being as original as his spelling.

"'Slipin' the sly.' That sounds like slang, and I never could understand slang; and what under the sun does 'count-her-feet' mean? Whose feet, I wonder, and who is to do the counting? 'Richard Darling!' Richard—oh, Dick? I have it now. It is one of Dick's mysterious warnings. There may be something here worth attending to, if I could only get the hang of this odd epistle."

He again intently perused it.

"Does he mean counterfeit?" he asked doubtfully.

"Am I to understand that some enemy has hid counterfeit money in my house for the purpose of getting me into trouble? Perhaps I had better search for it."

He was prevented from doing so by another ring at the bell. Thrusting Dick's letter into his pocket, he waited impatiently to see who it was.

The parlor door opened, and in walked his missing pupil, a demure look upon her face.

If she had felt any doubt as to the sentiment of her teacher toward her, the look of sudden gladness that beamed upon his face would have dispelled it.

She advanced with a quiet, dignified air.

"I was just thinking of you," was his welcome.

"Shall we proceed with our lesson to-day?"

"No, sir."

"But you have missed a lesson."

"I am afraid I shall have to miss others, Mr. Spencer. Certain circumstances render it inadvisable that my lessons should continue for the present."

He looked up with quick surprise and alarm.

"Why, Helen—Miss Andrews—" he said, quickly. "What *can* have happened? In what have I offended?"

"In nothing," she replied. "The offense rests with others."

"There is offense, then?" he quickly asked.

She drew back a little before replying. Whatever she may have intended to say, she was prevented by a new ringing at the bell.

He stood a moment, looking toward the door, as if he could have annihilated the person interrupting.

Heavy steps followed, as if more than one man had entered. But they passed the door of the parlor and seemed to go toward the rear of the house.

"They must be friends of my housekeeper," he remarked, paying no further attention to the visitors.

Miss Andrews stood in a quiet, observant attitude, seemingly not quite satisfied with her position, and as if in doubt just how to act.

At this moment the footsteps again approached the door. It was quickly opened, and two rather roughly dressed men entered.

One of them, whose face Harry remembered having seen somewhere lately, approached him, saying:

"Excuse me, miss; I have a bit of business with this gentleman."

"I shall go, then," nervous at some indefinite threat in his tone.

"Do not go," Harry quickly exclaimed. "I have no private business with these men. What do you wish, sir?"

"Do you recognize this package?" holding out a small parcel.

"I do not."

"Perhaps you may now," suggested Ned Hogan, for it was he.

He quickly opened the parcel and displayed a considerable number of bank-notes.

"Well, sir?" asked Harry, questioningly.

"That is well played, Mr. Spencer. These came out of your private desk. They are counterfeits of the kind that the city has been flooded with lately, and—"

"And what?"

"It is my duty to arrest you as an accomplice of these counterfeiters."

There was an appealing cry. Harry looked up, to find the eyes of Miss Andrews fixed with trembling solicitude upon his, to feel her hand laid protectingly upon his shoulder.

CHAPTER IX.

DICK GIVES THE DETECTIVES A COMMISSION.

THE two Government detectives are seated in their room at the hotel.

Or not both seated just now, for Frazer is pacing the floor in a restless, discontented manner. Jack Bounce, however, has established his large frame in one of his easy attitudes, and is coolly peeling an orange, while he looks up in a questioning manner at his associate.

Well, we have tried hiding our heads and waiting for developments," declared Frazer, sarcastically.

"There's that fellow, Hogan, has just arrested a man as one of the gang. That's the work *we* ought to be at."

"That is so!" admitted Jack, thoughtfully. "He is to have a hearing this morning. We must drop round and take a squint at the evidence. I've a notion there's nothing in it."

"How about that boy you invested ten dollars in?" queried Will. "I hope he don't go blowing about the streets howhe has humbugged a brace of Uncle Sam's detectives. That would be too pleasant."

"Nary a blow," came from the youthful voice at the open door.

The officers turned quickly to see the small figure of Dick Darling, who entered the room with the most free-and-easy air imaginable.

"And what have you done to earn your money yet?" cried Frazer.

"Now you want to git clean to the bottom of the box afore I've opened the lid. Ain't got much in my box yit, anyhow. And that little I'm a-spreadin' out. S'pose you've heerd what Ned Hogan's gone and did?"

"Oh, yes."

"Thinks he's struck ile," continued Dick. "Don't run that way in *my* head. Harry Spencer's one of my particular friends. *He* don't know no more 'bout counterfeits than a cow knows 'bout 'rithmetic."

"What is the evidence against him?" asked Jack.

"They've found a bunch of counterfeits in one of his drawers. There's some deviltry back of it all. They've been put there by somebody that's down on him. And the chap that put them there, that's the chap *we* want."

The two officers were looking with deeply-interested eyes at Dick as he slowly laid out this programme of his opinions.

"The boy may be right," admitted Will. "We must be at this hearing, Jack, and if it looks as he says, the next thing will be to spy out Spencer's enemies."

"Let Dick unload h's bag first," answered Jack. "He knows more yet."

"Come round here on biz," declared Dick, importantly. "Firstly, want you to write me a letter."

"Certainly, Dick, we will do that."

"Tain't 'cause I can't do it myself. But somehow I ain't extra at flingin' the pen. Now I want this in one o' your swingin', cavortin' business hands, so the chap that gits it 'll think he's got a million-dollar job, and will let hisself loose on an answer."

"All right," declared Jack, laughing, as he seated himself at a table and drew up pens and paper. "Strike in. I'll make a document you may be proud of."

"Correck! That's what I'm arter. Jist pull out this way: 'I've got a big contrack for a lawyer, which I think is 'bout your size and weight. There's 'bout a hundred thousand dollars in it and fine pickin's for a lawyer. If you're in the market for sich a job, let's hear from you instanter, if not sooner. 'Point an interview.' Got that in shape?"

"Yes, with amendments."

"Well, let me see what next. Oh! yes! I've got it. 'Yours 'spectfully, Richard Darling.'"

"That's short and sweet."

"All I want's an answer. Calkerlate that'll wake him up."

"But what directions shall I give your legal friend to write to?" asked Jack.

"Philadelfy's enough. If I giv him my mansion on Walnut street, he mought call, and that ain't in the game. Want an answer by mail."

"But how are you going to get it? Philadelphia is a sizable place, with a good many people in it."

"Why, bless your eyes," retorted Dick, laughing, "all the letter-carriers know me like beans. Can't go 'long the streets without them droppin' cor'spondence into my hands."

"How shall this be directed?" asked Jack, curiously, as he closed and sealed the envelope.

"Pass it over; I'll 'tend to *that* part of the job. Don't like to put you to no more trouble."

It was very evident he did not intend that they should know the destination of his epistle.

"Hope you don't think I've been gettin' money under false pretenses?" seating himself coolly on a corner of the table.

"I don't see that you've done much to earn it yet," answered Will Frazer.

"Well, then, I'll put you on ten dollars' worth of a lay. There's a chap as keeps an old clo' store on

South street, which there mought be some fun in keepin' an eye on."

"For what purpose?"

"That's jist what I don't know; but I've a noshin that there's a screw loose 'bout that ind'vidual."

"Who is he?"

"It's Solomon Sly, or old Sol, as I generally call the dried-up cove. He hangs out at 479 South. Sells mixtures, such as trowsers, shoes, and hair-pins. Wants watchin' mighty bad."

"Then why don't you watch him?" asked Jack.

"Got other biz on hand," was Dick's rejoinder. "Can't split myself and be in two places at wunst. Spottin' higher game, I am. Guess I'll go and see Ned Hogan."

And cramming his hat close down on his head, Dick stalked from the room.

It was not a half-hour before he had managed to get his letter directed.

It was directed to:

"MR. ANDREW WILLIAMSON,
Fourth and Walnut sts.,
City."

Dick haunted the post-office the next day, asking a dozen times if there was any letter for Mr. Richard Darling.

Just before night it came—a voluminous legal envelope.

Dick read the direction eagerly, then deposited the epistle in some inside pocket with an air of supreme satisfaction, and strutted, dignifiedly, out into the full human tide of Chestnut street.

CHAPTER X.

A SOCIAL GLASS.

THE reader must accompany us next up the line of the wharves on the Delaware.

Making our way along the line of open stores devoted to truck in all its branches, we finally reach the vicinity of Poplar street wharf, in the wake of Mr. Ned Hogan, who is walking leisurely along, enjoying his meerschaum and the spring air.

At the wharf in question lies a trim little vessel with the tall spar and sharp build of a yacht.

Hogan walked quietly down to the wharf, and inspected her with the eye of a sailor. On her stern, in plain letters, was the name Molly.

"That's the craft," he said to himself.

"A neat boat," he added, aloud, leaning easily against a post, and speaking to a man on board.

"Hard to beat," answered the man, a short, thin-faced person, with reddish hair.

"Calculate she ought to be a good goer," continued Ned, blowing a cloud of smoke to windward. "Let's have a closer look."

He sprang lightly on board the boat and commenced the inspection.

"Used as a yacht?" he asked.

"More for pleasure than profit," confessed the man, rising from the coil of rope on which he had been reclining. "If you want to see a well got up boat, I won't mind showing you through her."

"Much obliged," answered Hogan, puffing away at his meerschaum.

He followed his guide through the interior of the vessel, praising her appointments very liberally.

"I like to get hold of a man that is in love with a fine boat," the red-haired person declared.

"That's me," ejaculated Hogan. "Much obliged, Mr. Turner—" he had got the man's name. "Take something to drink."

Mr. Turner needed no great persuasion, but yielded to the warm invitation of Ned. A tavern on the wharf soon enveloped them, and a glass of the most fiery beverage cemented their new acquaintance.

Neither of them seemed inclined to stop at one glass. Seating themselves at a table, they entered into a desultory conversation on all sorts of impersonal subjects, Ned taking care that their talk should be well moistened with whisky.

He was a thoroughly-seasoned toper, and the liquor

affected him no more than so much water. Not so with Turner. His head seemed quickly to feel the strong potations, and his tongue to grow loosened in consequence.

"By the way," remarked Hogan, as if the thought had just occurred to him, "the Molly doesn't belong here. I was here a week ago, but nary Molly."

"Just put in a few days back," Turner assured him.

"What port do you hail from, shipmate?"

"From New York last."

"Aha! Come up the river lately?"

"Oh! two or three days ago," taking a sip of his glass.

"Come straight up from Chester?" asked Hogan, easily.

"Made a stop at the fishing-place just above the town to get some shad," was the reply.

"Stop there long?"

"An hour maybe. Cap went ashore to see the haunted house that lays back in the meadows."

"A haunted house, eh?" with a new influx of interest. "Did Cap take anything ashore, or bring anything aboard from the haunted house?"

"Oh! a paper parcel. Lunch, I guess, seeing he didn't fetch it back."

"My eyes! that must have been fun; lunching with a party of ghosts," and Hogan again laughed.

"I didn't say a blamed word about lunching with ghosts," half-growled Turner, rising. "Don't think I'll stay here to have ghosts rammed down my throat every time I open my mouth."

He walked toward the door with an unsteady step, followed by Hogan.

Reaching the street they noticed a well-dressed man upon the wharf, who was pacing up and down with an impatient tread.

He caught sight of Turner's advance and hastened toward him.

"This is a sweet picture of affairs," he cried, angrily. "Who has charge of the boat now? Where is Captain Parker? You have been drinking!"

"Just wetting my whistle with an old friend I knew down South," explained Turner, nervously. "Nothing to hurt."

"The smell of whisky is enough to hurt," and the gentleman spoke hotly. "And you have it in your legs as well as your head. Come aboard at once, sir."

Hogan stood and watched them as they stepped aboard the yacht and disappeared in the cabin.

"Dunno whether I got paid for my whisky or not," muttered Hogan to himself. "Only broke the ice to-day. It don't do to go too fast till you know your ground. Guess I'll stroll up this way again soon, and pay my respects to Mr. Joe Turner. He's not not extra talkative, drunk or sober."

He was about to turn down the street when his quick eye caught sight of something that arrested his attention. It was no more than a boy's head, which peered up above the top of a thick post on the wharf, the eyes fixed searchingly on the Molly.

Hogan looked at him a moment with a dawning smile. He then walked easily round and behind the lad, moving cautiously up toward him. When Hogan got near enough to him he touched him on the shoulder, saying:

"Hey, Dick! what is your lay now?"

Dick recognized the voice, and answered without turning his head:

"You seen that man with the red head?"

"Certainly I did."

"Well, he's my oyster."

"Who is he, Dick?" asked Hogan, curiously.

"That's what I want to know," averred Dick. "He's one of your high-toned coves. I'm arter him like a chimley-swaller arter a fly. You git! You're too big and clumsy for this lay. Been 'vestigatin' red-head, ain't you?"

"A trifle."

"Hit any snags?"

"Only found that the Lucy stopped at the fisheries above Chester, and the captain went ashore to visit

a haunted house there. There's nothing in that. Ghosts ain't our game."

"Dunno," murmured Dick, dubiously. "There's ghosts sometimes that wear whole skins. Now git, Hogan. Your room's better than your company jist now."

"Bring word what luck you have," ordered Hogan walking away.

"Ay, ay! I'll post you! Fur as I see fit," was his *sub-rosa* answer.

A minute afterward the gentleman looked out from the cabin door. There was nothing visible with more life than the post which had concealed Dick, except the distant form of Ned Hogan, now rapidly walking away.

Dick was ensconced behind another post near the edge of the wharf. He held in his hand the letter he had received from Mr. Williamson. He next produced the envelope of which he took such frequent inspection. It was addressed to

"MR. EDWARD HOGAN,
Fifth and Race sts.,
Philada."

He laid the two envelopes together and examined them closely. Finally they went together into his pockets as he said, with a satisfied air:

"I'll bet my new suit 'gainst a doll-baby's spring hat that the same man writ them both. Tryin' to change his writin', but writin' ain't easy changed."

Dick's next evolutions were of the stealthiest character. Creeping with catlike movement to the edge of the wharf, he clambered quietly over the wharf-log and let himself down the vertical side as easily and noiselessly as if he had been on level ground.

One of the cabin windows of the Molly was open, and this was Dick's objective point. By some acrobatic system of wriggling and writhing he established himself on the stern of the Molly, clinging to the rudder-post with a death-grip, and in such a way that his eyes just reached to the open window.

Lifting himself a little with both hands he got one glimpse of the interior of the cabin, the most important feature of which was the forms of the two men seated on each side of a center table, and engaged in conversation. Dick let himself down again, out of sight, but with every nerve strained to hear.

"Mind your eyes now, Williamson and Brick-top. If you talk too much some chap of my size mought git a ring in your nose."

CHAPTER XI.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

WE have seen the parlor of Mr. Andrews's residence, on the occasion of Mr. Williamson's somewhat curt dismissal. We will now betake ourselves to the sitting-room of the same mansion.

It is an elegantly-appointed apartment, furnished in the richest taste. It has altogether that home-like aspect of a room whose adornment has grown out of the needs and tastes of its inmates.

A deep bay window occupies the lower end of the room. Here, seated on an easy-chair, her feet resting on a tall footstool, reclines a matronly lady. She has once been very pretty, and still wears much of her good looks, though age has broadened the lines of her face.

Opposite her sits, in a small chair, her arm resting on the sill of the open window, a young lady, whose beautiful face seems a *spirituelle* copy of that of the matron. They are really mother and daughter—Mrs. Andrews and her daughter Helen.

Mrs. Andrews plays leisurely with her fan, for the day is warm for mid-April, and the sun bathes the face of the windows in fervent light.

"Then you did as I wished?" remarked the mother. "You simply dismissed him, without entering into reasons or argument?"

"Yes, mother," with a weary expression; "and I was never so thoroughly disgusted with myself in my life before."

"Why so? The dismissal of a music-teacher is not such a vital matter."

"I don't know," returned Helen, with a quick movement of impatience. "I mismanaged it, I suppose. I know I must have made it look as if I had some personal objection to him. He seemed much hurt."

"Oh, that matters very little," replied Mrs. Andrews. "That will easily mend; he can cure his wounds with a new scholar."

"I am afraid a host of new scholars will not have that effect," and Helen rested her head wearily on the window-sill.

"I fear your music lessons were allowed to go on even too long," averred Mrs. Andrews, using her fan rapidly.

"Why so? No one can object to him as a teacher."

"You have been growing entirely too much interested in him. I would not have my daughter stoop to waste a second thought on any one so far below her in station."

"He is a gentleman," declared Helen, proudly. "I fear I have not always impressed him as a lady."

"This is ridiculous, child. As if it was of the least importance what he chose to think. I am glad that your connection with him has been broken off. A man not only of the lower classes, but seemingly without known father or mother."

"Who told you that?" demanded Helen, with a quick flush upon her face. "That is the reason then that I had to give him up? But I know who told you. It was Mr. Williamson, who has thus sought to injure a deserving young man, by what may be an infamous lie."

"You are assuming too much now, Helen."

"I am *assuming* nothing. Suppose it all be true that Williamson says—nay, all that he implies—even then the stubborn fact remains that his base gossip lowers him far more than his birth can possibly lower Mr. Spencer."

The young lady's voice was a little warm, and she spoke with much energy of accent.

"Well, you *are* improving, Helen," declared her mother, sarcastically. "I think it was high time that I changed your associations. Yet people generally, even in these democratic days, would hardly care to mix with gentlemen born out of lawful wedlock—people in our set, I mean."

"I fear that if people in our set knew all, they would be still less inclined to associate with Mr. Spencer."

As she spoke Helen had risen and stood, resting one hand on the chair-back, her face and the whole pose of her body seeming full of indignant scorn of the verdict of "our set."

Mrs. Andrews lifted her long lashes indolently, and rested her eyes for a moment in admiration upon the graceful *pose* of her daughter.

"Knew all. What can you mean?"

"I mean that Harry Spencer has been arrested—this very day—in my presence. Arrested for no less a crime than being an accomplice of counterfeiters. The proof was found in his house."

"Why, girl, you take my breath!" exclaimed Mrs. Andrews, starting up from her reclining posture.

"It is all true."

"And you still defend him? Did you expect anything better from one of his sort?"

"I still defend him!" said Helen, seeming to gain the calmness which her mother had lost. "I believe—I *know* that he is innocent. Therefore I defend him. There are strong circumstances in his favor, mother. I am satisfied that the judge will accept bail for him."

"It must be some heavy amount, then. And who is his wealthy friend who will risk much on his honesty?"

"The friend is found. I have directed Mr. Widdin to see that he obtains bail, on the security of my private inheritance."

"Why, child, are you mad?" cried Mrs. Andrews,

hotly. "But this is ridiculous. A woman cannot go bail."

"I think my offer, with power of attorney in Mr. Widdin's hands, will be accepted," replied Helen. "I think, indeed, that Mr. Spencer is already free. I have no fears of his avoiding a trial."

"But for you to take such an action! Without consulting me or your father!" exclaimed the excited and agitated woman.

"Excuse me, mother, I did consult with father. He quite agreed with me. I had no time to see you. And I knew, of course, that you would not agree to what I had determined on doing."

Mrs. Andrews hurried from the room, not daring to trust herself further under her angry excitement.

"I knew there must be a scene with mother," murmured Helen, sadly. "I am glad the worst of it is over."

CHAPTER XII.

A WATER-RAT.

BUT what of Dick, whom we left clinging to the rudder-posts of the yacht Molly?

The boy was very quick of hearing, and his acute senses were strained to not miss a word of the important conversation which he hoped to overhear.

Shifting his position so as to get his right foot on one of the rudder-irons, Dick gained a more comfortable location, and one that brought his ear nearer to the open window.

The voices of the two men, also, grew unconsciously louder as they proceeded with their conversation, Turner's half-tipsy condition interfering with his natural cautiousness.

"Struck his fancy from the start; I could see that," he said, decidedly. "I don't think it was so much the money—though there's mighty few men to whom a pile ain't an object."

"What was it, then?" spoke the deeper tones of Mr. Williamson.

"The mystery. You see, he's been troubled at heart about who his father and mother were. Had a fear of something disgraceful, too. Why, as soon as I broached the matter, his eyes lit up like two stars on a dark sky."

"Did you let out anything about the location of the property, or the residence or condition of his parents?"

"Certainly; told the city they lived in, and all that."

"I should be very little surprised if you did. Especially if you let anybody pour liquor into you, as to-day."

"Told him they lived in New Orleans, and were French creoles," protested Turner. "Guess that's far enough off the track. Told him it was out of the question to say a word more till I was sure he was the son."

"And asked him for remembrances of his infancy? And relics, if he had any?" inquired Williamson.

"Now it's comin'," thought Dick. "If I miss a word now, I'd jist better let go my holt, and drown myself for an idiot."

His face broadened with a silent laughter that was full of intense enjoyment of the situation.

"His clothes were probably sold by the crone who stole him and brought him to Philadelphia," Turner went on. "All he had left belonging to his youth was a bronze medal, and a curiously knit chain attached to it. This he remembers to have had in his childhood."

"Good! We must have that medal. Get it from him by any lie you can manufacture. If he won't take, find where he keeps it. I am bound to have the Milton estate, and won't be stopped by any slight difficulty."

"Going to play the lost heir?" asked Turner.

"His recollections will be of no use if somebody else has them in advance of him. Probe him again on that subject; he may recall some new points. And the medal will clinch the business. The old

woman who stole him will swear black is white if I instruct her to."

"I see," confessed Turner. "You're a blamed shrewd one. The old lady Milton will swallow it all as easy as a cat swallows milk. What a precious son you will make."

"I?" said Williamson, quickly. "No, no, my pater-nity is too well known. I have my man, though."

"Who?"

"Captain Parker is the man."

"Well, if I ain't holed a precious pair of rascals then whitewash me, that's all," Dick had to admit, to himself. "Got that whole biz mapped out. But they're mighty shy of the counterfeit bizness. Bricktop talks as if he weren't in that ring."

Dick's position by this time had grown unbearably unpleasant. He shifted his feet and tried to make himself more comfortable. In doing so his hands slipped, and—the parties in the cabin were suddenly startled by a heavy splash in the water.

Turner ran to the cabin window and looked out. There was nothing visible, though a circle of wave-rings was spreading in the water from the rudder-post outward. Williamson, alarmed lest their conversation should have been overheard, ran on deck and looked warily into the water all around the boat. But there was no object to be seen, and the ring of wavelets was rapidly dying out.

"It is strange," he said. "Something must have fallen from the wharf. But whatever it is it has gone to the bottom, so we need not care much. Attend to that matter instantly, Turner, and report to me at once. And mind, let us have no more tipping while this affair is in hand."

"I don't think any fresh-water sailor will make a fool of me again easily."

"Don't forget that," said Williamson, as he left the vessel and walked briskly up the wharf.

At the same moment, from behind a small coast-ing-smack that occupied the opposite side of the dock, there appeared a grinning boy's face, washed clean of the dirt it had lately gathered while rooting behind the post.

Dick crawled up the wharf and stood in the sun-light on the top of the wharf log, the water dripping from him as from a drowned rat.

"Reckon I've guv my new clothes a seasonin'," he said, trying to squeeze some of the superabundant water out of them. "Don't keer how soon it rains now. Can't spile my fixin's."

He got out of that locality, and laid himself out in the sun to dry in a board yard not far distant, removing and spreading out his outer garments till there was little left but his bare skin for the sun to act on.

But we must leap over a space of time and present Dick, thoroughly dried, renovated, and remarkably well washed, for him, in a different locality.

It was near the evening of the same day, and in the region of Fourth and Walnut, that we again take up our water-rat, lounging about with his eyes turned toward the door of the building containing Mr. Wil-liamson's office.

An express wagon loaded with goods, stops in front of the door, and Dick hurries over to that side of the street.

The expressman fumbles awhile among his parcels and then takes out a small, oblong package.

"Here, boy, hold this a minute," he calls to Dick, handing him the package, while he extricates him-self from his constrained position.

Dick takes instant opportunity to read its address:

"ANDREW WILLIAMSON,

Fourth and Walnut Sts., Philadelphia."

On the opposite side was the broad card of the Adams Express Co., dated at Chester, Pa., the pre-vious day.

"That will do, my lad," said the expressman, cheerily, as he took the package. "Ask me for a sugar plum the next time you see me,"

"If you only knowed what a sugar plum you'd guv me now!" thought Dick, as he walked easily away. "Guess I've done my day's work."

But his day's work was not yet performed. He had not gone any great distance on his homeward journey ere he formed a new resolution.

"Allers best to strike while the iron's hot," he de-clared. "Don't do to leave bizness like this open if you don't want it to sp'ile. Guess I'd best go see my detectives and sort out some work for them."

Dick laughed silently as a comical thought occur-red to him.

"Bet there ain't many customers in these diggin's keeps as fine a pack of private detectives as Dick Darling. And the beauty of it is, they think they're using me. That's the gayest sell out."

He continued his silent enjoyment of the thought as he made his way toward the domicile of Ned Hogan.

"I'll guv Hogan the Chester job, 's long as he's got a lookout there. The other chaps kin work the Bosting lay. Guess that's a fair divide of the 'sponsibility. Gettin' too much work on my shoul-ders fur one boy to put through without help."

He found Hogan at home, seated behind his ever-lasting meerschaum.

"Got five minutes fer you," announced Dick, with an air of great importance, as he deposited himself in the nearest chair. "Want you to write a letter in double quick."

"Sartain!" assented Hogan, enjoying what seem-ed to strike him as a good joke. "What is it to be? Propel."

He drew pen, ink and paper from the drawer of his desk.

"Want you to write to your watch-dog, Harris, at Chester. I'll jist guv you the p'int. You kin shape them. Mr. Andrew Williamson, of this big town, jist got a package from Chester by Adams Express. Must have been sent yisterday or this mornin'. Now I want Harris to find out all he kin 'bout that package; who sent it, what kind of a cove he was, where he hails from, or any particulars he kin stir up. Do you take it in?"

"Yes," averred Hogan. "Are you in earnest?"

"Solid; nothing else now."

"Here goes then."

Hogan proceeded to write as directed by Dick, folding and sealing the letter.

"And now, what the blazes is it all about?" he de-manded, holding the letter in his hand. "Have you trod into any lark's nest?"

"Guv me the letter," was Dick's only reply. "I'll post it. 'Tain't safe to answer your question yet. Want to hear from Harris fu'st. Mought be barkin' up the wrong tree."

Dick took his departure, hastening to the nearest lamp-post to deposit his letter, after which he made his way toward the hotel patronized by the Govern-ment detectives.

CHAPTER XIII.

DICK AND HIS DETECTIVES.

DICK had the same luck with the Government officials as he had had with Ned Hogan, finding them both at home.

They were seated at their table, busily engaged in writing, when Dick swaggered into the room, dis-pensing with the formality of a knock.

"You see, I'm allers at home 'mong my friends," he announced. "Don't ax me to take a cheer. That mought interfere with the freedom of the citi-zen, you know." He helped himself to a chair with all the freedom possible as he spoke. "Go on with your dockyments. Don't mind me. My bizness kin wait."

"I swear if I think you'll ever die of modesty," cried Will Frazer. "Out with your business, for we've no time for nonsense now."

"All right!" and Dick, unabashed, drew his chair

up to the table. "Know anybody in Bosting? Any guv'nors, perlicemen, er sich?"

"I know some of the Bostonian officers," admitted Frazer, "if that will satisfy you."

"That's clever," and Dick spread himself for a serious job of dictation. "Write to the smartest Yankee you know as follows:—I want him or her, whichever it is, to hunt up a fam'ly in Bosting, that calls itself Milton."

"Very well. What is the first name?"

"Jist say Milton, and you'll say all I know. Twenty years ago, or thereaway, this fam'ly dwelt somewhere in the outskirts of Bosting, in an old-fashioned stone house. It had grounds around it, and all the houses in sight had grounds. They seemed somehow to run to grounds."

"All right. Go on."

"This fam'ly consisted of a handsome daddy and a beautiful mammy, and a neat little toad of a boy, just turned of bein' a baby. Well, the boy was stole, and has never been hearn tell of since, though they've wasted enough cash in advertisements to keep up a fu'st-class dry-goods store."

"Is it a five-cent novel you are composing now?" asked Jack Bounce, laughing at Dick.

"True as gospel, every word I've spoke. There's money in it, and I know where to lay my finger on the boy, that's growed up to be a handsome young man, the picture of his daddy. And there's chaps tryin' to work a traverse, and play the lost son found, and throw him out in the cold. You see I'm posted."

"Your novel is making good headway, anyhow," was Jack's laughing comment.

"Never you mind. Put it all down, and guv me the letter to post."

Jack wrote the letter to Dick's satisfaction, addressed it as directed by Frazer, and gave it to Dick.

"Is that correct?" he asked of the boy.

"Right to the bull's-eye. Must be goin'. Any news since I see'd you last?"

"Only the arrest of Spencer, with a batch of a new issue of counterfeits in his house."

"Yes. That's the out-and-outerest sell. Know Harry Spencer a bit too well to swaller that. What's more, I've got a notion of the cove as put up the job on him. Where is he? In Moya?"

"No. He is out on bail."

"Clever!" exclaimed Dick. "These chaps best be keerful they don't wake up Dick Darling. Anything from Sol Sly?"

"We have a deep shadow on him," answered Jack. "I am of the notion that that long nose of yours has smelt out something there. He has more customers than come to buy clothes."

"I knowed it!" declared Dick, triumphantly. "Watch them. Watch them all. It's a big ring we've got to sarcumvent."

"You are a born detective, and shrewder than half the force. You say you know that a job was put up on Spencer, and who did it?"

"That's what I think. 'Tain't what I know," was Dick's cautious reply.

"Who is your man?"

"The chap you're watchin' on South street; Mr. Solomon Sly. Mind, I don't know this. And I'd give a cold b'iled mack'el to have it proved. But a fox that's onc't learnt the way to a chicken-coop is apt to sneak back ag'in."

"And what follows?"

"That Sol will have more bizness in Harry Spencer's house. And soon, too, if I ain't off my eggs. Watch him like a hawk, for sure as you live, there's folks putting up another job on Spencer."

"And if he should try it?"

"Snatch him, jist as you'd snatch the last cold tater on the plate. S'arch him, and salt down his valuables. Don't leave nothing cur'us 'bout him. I must be gettin' now, gents. Fear my supper'll git cold waitin', and never could digest cold vittels."

And Dick walked out of the room with an air as if he carried a separate world on each shoulder.

CHAPTER XIV.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

HARRY SPENCER walked along with his head down and a deeply troubled look upon his face.

"It seems as if the sky had suddenly fallen out of my world. Everything was so bright and promising, and now misfortunes seem treading in each other's footsteps. If I could but lay my hand on the hidden enemy who is working in the dark against me."

He walked on reflectively. The street was little frequented. Evening was coming on with a damp, chill feel in the air. He drew his coat closer round him, with a slight shudder.

"I am free, but how shall I ever escape the consequences of the coming trial? Those counterfeit notes—it was shrewd work of my enemy. I can see but one way clear. If I can but discover who has an object in injuring me, I may put the officers on the track of the true counterfeiters."

The thought seemed to strike him as a good one. He considered it in all its bearings.

He paused for a moment, looking vacantly along the street.

"My enemy has worked in another direction," he next mused. "Something has come between me and Helen. Nothing of her own will, I know, for her action on my arrest was a sweet assurance that I had indeed won her love. It may have been some influence brought to bear upon her proud mother. If I could but meet Helen—if I could but learn—"

He paused, for a figure which he had been noting for some time in the distance, now declared itself to his recollection.

"It is he!" he said. "The Chester man. This is an opportune meeting."

Joe Turner, for it was our red-haired acquaintance, seemed to recognize Harry as quickly.

"I was wishing to see you again," the fellow declared; "but have not had time to call at your house."

"You brought me very interesting information, sir," answered Harry, "though rather vague and shadowy. I am anxious to learn more from you in relation to this matter."

"There are reasons why I should not tell you any more at present," replied Turner. "I may be raising false hopes in your mind. I must first learn if the recollections you have given me agree with the facts; I have written to a legal friend in New Orleans to inquire, and if you can recall any other remembrances of your infancy, no matter how slight, they may be very important. What you have given me so far is too general."

"I have been trying to recollect," responded Harry. "I can only recall one or two slight points. I remember a fall I had in childhood from the arms of the lady I mentioned, and her great trouble in consequence; I also recollect a toy of which I was very fond. It was a little box, with a black figure in it, which sprung up on touching a spring; I remember that the figure had lost its nose."

"These are important particulars," averred Turner. "Any one might describe the house; but special incidents are not so easily arrived at. You have no other relic than the one mentioned?"

"That is all."

"I should like to see it."

"I have it in my private desk at home. If you should call, I will show it to you."

"Thank you; I shall do so very soon. I must be going now. Good-day!" and Turner walked on.

Harry proceeded slowly in the opposite direction. He now turned upon the busy pavement of Eighth street, yet thronged with people, late as it was in the day.

A handsome carriage was drawn up before the door of a large dry-goods establishment, its ebony-skinned coachman evidently impatient of the long delay.

Just as Harry reached this point, two ladies stepped from the store door. They were about entering the carriage when the elder paused and said:

"I think after all, Helen, I had better have that lace. It will only take a minute or two. You need not come back; wait for me in the carriage."

Gathering up her long train, the richly-attired lady swept back into the store.

The young lady was about stepping into the carriage, when her purpose was arrested by a touch upon her arm, and the tones of a well-known voice.

"One moment, Helen—Miss Andrews."

She turned with a slight start on seeing that it was indeed Harry Spencer, he who had been somehow that moment in her thoughts.

"My mother will be back immediately, Mr. Spencer," she said, in a warning voice.

"Yes, yes, I know; I have but a word. There has something come between us—the work of an enemy, I fear."

"The work of an enemy," she faintly replied.

"Can you tell me his name—and his object?" was his quick rejoinder.

"Not now—not now!" she answered. "I may—at some future time—when I am assured—when I feel at liberty to speak."

"It is very important that I should know now," he replied. "My arrest may have been the work of the same enemy."

"I will write—when I learn anything," she responded, in the same hurried, broken tone.

"One word more," he persisted, arresting her movement toward the carriage. "Some unknown friend saved me from the horrors of a prison. Do you know who?"

He looked eagerly into her eyes.

She turned her head away, answering in constrained accents:

"How should I know? It matters not. There is no virtue in assisting people where one risks nothing. Good-by, Mr. Spencer."

She gave him her hand, and one long look from her soft eyes.

"Good-by, Helen," he said, with more tenderness in his lingering intonation than he dreamed of.

He assisted her into the carriage and walked on, just an instant before her mother stepped, in all her stateliness, from the store.

Mrs. Andrews leaned indolently back upon the richly-upholstered cushions, as the carriage rolled away.

"I did not take the lace, after all," she remarked; "it was not as fine as I thought. By the way, did I not see a young gentleman assisting you into the carriage?"

"Yes," slightly changing color.

"Who was it?"

"Mr. Spencer," was the quiet reply.

A look of dismay came upon the mother's face: she used her fan rapidly, but said nothing, and did not again speak during the ride home.

"There is a gentleman in the parlor," announced the girl, on their entering the house.

"Ah, who is it?" asked Mrs. Andrews.

"It is only I," spoke a voice from the open parlor door, and Mr. Williamson stepped out into the hall.

"Very happy to see you," declared the lady. "We have just returned from a shopping expedition. Helen, entertain Mr. Williamson for a few minutes, until I remove my wraps."

Helen entered the parlor with a very unpromising look upon her face. She knew well what her mother meant by the few minutes, and dreaded an interview with this man. She seated herself without removing her shawl and hat.

"I have not seen you, Helen," he said, taking a chair near her, "since your abrupt dismissal of me a week or so ago. I do not know yet what I did on that occasion to offend you."

"I do not see that any explanations are necessary. I am very weary, Mr. Williamson: I hope you will not dwell on this undesirable subject."

"You grow weary very easily lately—of my society," he replied, with a sudden burst of anger.

"Once you were more complaisant. I have a right to demand the reason of this change."

"When a professed gentleman descends to the envious detraction of another, he has no reason to ask so pointedly why he has made his motiees and himself despised." Her tone was as hot as his. "You volunteered uncalled-for gossip about Mr. Spencer, with the object of injuring him in my estimation. You have but injured yourself. I shall send my mother down to you, Mr. Williamson."

She left the room with a deeply-offended air, leaving him gnawing his lip in anger. He sat a moment irresolutely; then suddenly started up, seized his hat, and left the house.

"I shall be even with you yet, my lady!" he muttered, bitterly, as he descended the steps.

CHAPTER XV.

DICK FEELING HIS LINES.

Dick's watchfulness had redoubled after the reception by Mr. Williamson of the express-package.

There was not a person who entered or left the building containing his office but passed under the surveillance of the boy's keen eyes.

This incessant vigilance of Dick was not without its reward. He succeeded in adding another valuable mesh to the net which he was slowly drawing around certain unsuspecting individuals.

"I tell you," he declared to Jack Bounce, dropping in unceremoniously on that easy-going personage, "I tell you there's fun afloat. More work cut out for you detectives."

"How is that?" asked Jack, taking his feet down from the window and looking round at Dick.

"Well, this is the solid English of it. If I ain't sold out by circumstances, there'll be new counterfeits on the market afore the next sun gits his head above water."

"How do you know this, boy?" demanded Jack, speaking quickly and sharply.

"It's a way I have of smellin' out things."

"That's not much of an answer."

"Bless you," said Dick, laughing, "I didn't intend to give you much of an answer. I allers want my figgers to prove theirselves afore I add them up. It's jist this. I've follered what I think are counterfeits into sartain shady places. I don't know, mind you, and maybe won't jist yit. So I'll hold my tongue. But if you hear soon of anybody shovin' the queer, jist recollect that Dick Darling told you so."

Jack looked at the boy with an odd expression. He seemed puzzling himself to take Dick's measure.

"All right!" he exclaimed. "I don't forget, easily."

"Any news from Bosting yit?"

"Nothing; it is too soon."

"It'll come. There's a bit more fun in *that* quarter."

They were interrupted at this point by the entrance of Jack's associate, Mr. Will Frazer.

The spare face of this gentleman was somewhat flushed, as if he had been imbibing good liquor, or bad news.

He flung himself recklessly into a chair, looking up with a woebegone expression that set Jack laughing.

"It beats thunder! I'm just ready to give up!"

"Don't give up the ship," quoted Jack, with a comical grimace.

"Oh! you'd be fiddling if the world was on fire," growled Will, impatiently. "You are the most aggravating—"

"But I don't see that even a corner of the world is on fire. There is not a straw burning, so far as my eyesight goes."

Dick, who had a high admiration of Jack Bounce's wit, sat listening, with his whole face full of silent enjoyment.

"I'll show you where the fire is!" exclaimed Will. "What do you think of a new note afloat? A bran-

new twenty on the Arlington First National. And hardly a false line in it. It took one of our cutest brokers to make it out. I tell you this is enough to make a man forswear his grandmother!"

Jack had started hastily from his lounging position on hearing these words. His eyes were fixed on Dick as if he was looking at a wizard.

"Well, I'll be shot if it ain't come out just as he said," cried the officer. "You're on a hot trail, Dick, sure as shooting! What is it, boy? And who are the parties in it?"

"Don't know," Dick drawled out, with an aggravating utterance. "I see'd somethin' that I 'spected *was* queer money takin' wing. Couldn't swear, though, that this is the same stuff, and wouldn't like to risk troublin' innercent folks."

"Leave that to us—we are older hands than you. Put us on the track, and leave us to follow it up."

"Did put you on Sol Sly's track," returned Dick. "How's that lay progressing?"

"He is a doubtful character. But we haven't caught him napping yet."

"And won't very soon," added Will, with a touch of scorn. "The boy was right in one thing, though. The Jew has been in 1,085 North Eleventh street."

"When? To-day?" asked Dick, quickly.

"Yes."

"To see the folks?"

"To see Mr. Spencer, who was absent. Mr. Sly waited a half-hour for his return, and then left, saying he would call again."

"That's growin' nobby and interestin'," and Dick was somewhat excited. "What follered? Did you 'bey orders? Did you snatch him and go through him?"

"Yes. He was arrested and searched. We found not a penny's worth about him that didn't belong to him. Nothing more than a few nickels and a trinket or two. A cameo pin, a bronze medal with an odd sort of chain, a—"

"There! that'll do. That's a plenty!" said Dick, with intense sarcasm. "And you let him slide with all that on him?"

"Yes."

"Well, you *did* make purty fools of yourselves, and you kin say so ag'in and tell no lie. Why, Jack Bounce, that medal was the very thing he went through Harry Spencer's house for! And you're goin' to make a mint of trouble by lettin' it slip through your fingers. Bet high Sol hadn't that medal ten minits arter the perlice opened their claws and let him slide. I know where it is, though, and I'm goin' for it quicker'n greased lightnin' ever went for a scorched pig!"

And Dick left the room in high disgust with the police.

He had another important interview that same day with Ned Hogan.

The latter had just heard from Mr. Harris, at Chester, and had some information which Dick deemed of interest.

"He easily traced the man who left the package," confessed the detective.

"That's my mutton," cried Dick. "Who and what was the chap?"

"Harris represents him as a gentlemanly young fellow, who has been boarding for the last six months at the Steamboat Hotel in Chester. A well-dressed, sociable chap, who seems to have nothing to do but to enjoy himself, and plenty of money to help him do it. Nothing odd or suspicious about him."

"Mebbe not. What's his name?"

"William Hendricks."

"All right! Wears store-clothes, and cuts a figure, eh! O. K.! Bet he's *my* meat. Been investigatin' the Molly lately?"

"Yes. But Turner is pumped dry, I fancy; for nothing comes up now, pump as hard as I will."

"He's cute!" said Dick, admiringly.

"I only learned one piece of information."

"Let's hear it."

"The Molly is going to change her quarters. She sails from this port at ten to-morrow morning."

"That's news. There's more fun afloat. Shouldn't wonder if I sailed with her. Look out for news soon, Mr. Hogan. Things is comin' to a focus. And now, if you ain't got no objection, I'll go hunt my supper."

And, without waiting for an objection, Dick took his departure.

CHAPTER XVI.

DICK'S THIRD BATH.

NED HOGAN was right in one piece of information he had gained. There were busy notes of preparation on board the yacht Molly, the next morning. It was a bright, balmy day in the latter part of April, the sun shining with a warmth and splendor that presaged August weather.

Just at ten Mr. Williamson, who had been for some time closeted in the cabin, left the yacht, crying cheerily to the captain who had followed him on deck:

"A prosperous voyage! Be sure you hit the mark. Keep me posted in all your movements."

"Ay! ay!" sung back Captain Parker, waving his hands in adieu.

He was a handsome fellow, with long black mustache and dark curly hair. There was something in his face not unlike that of Harry Spencer.

Yet his expression was very different, his eyes having an unsteady, sinister look, while his mouth and chin seemed to indicate a lack of energy.

"If it is necessary, telegraph and I will come on at once," said Williamson.

"I don't think it will be necessary," the captain answered; "I have the facts here and here," tapping his forehead and his vest-pocket. "It will go hard if I don't manage them. Cast off that line!" he cried to one of the two sailors of the yacht.

In a minute more the Molly began to slowly glide out of her dock.

Now all her sails rose to the mast-head and were spread to their fullest extent. There was something bird-like in the graceful movement with which she bent to the breeze, and glided with increasing speed out into the broad bosom of the river.

Mr. Williamson stood gazing admiringly after her, as did also a knot of loungers on the next wharf.

Yet there was nowhere a sign of Dick Darling, who had, the night before, expressed his intention of taking a trip on the Molly. Had he changed his mind? Or had he been frightened off by the presence of Williamson? It was certain that he was not on board.

The yacht stood across till near the bar, then veered and stood down the open channel of the river.

The lawyer now turned and walked away, just one minute too soon to witness an incident which was curiously noted by the group of loungers.

"Look at the boy! He don't know how to use an oar I guess," said one. "What boat is that he's got?"

"Oh! Joe Carson's leaky old tub, that isn't worth the oakum to stop the leaks. The boy borrowed it to go a-fishing. By thunder, he'll be struck!"

"The yacht is trying to get out of his way."

"But did you ever see oars handled so awkwardly? He is right across her fore-foot again."

"Down goes his house!" shouted the other speaker. "I hope the venturesome young vagabond won't be drowned."

At that instant a slight, crashing sound was heard, reaching faintly to their ears. The boat they had been watching passed under the swiftly-gliding yacht.

"Where is the boy? Is he gone?" cried the first speaker, in alarm.

"Drown *him*," rejoined the other. "You could as well drown a fish. There he goes!"

They could see a slight, boyish form, clambering, hand over hand, up the side of the vessel, by a rope

he had grasped. In a moment more he sprung lightly in on the Molly's deck.

We will accompany him on board. He stood erect and defiant on the deck, the water running in streams from his drenched clothes.

"Well, if you ain't a purty set of one-hoss sailors, I'll sell out!" he exclaimed, contemptuously. "There's a new boat smashed inter kindlin' wood 'cause there ain't a man on board knows how to shift a rudder. You'd best go ashore and hire in a menagerie."

"It's your own stupidity, boy," growled Captain Parker, advancing. "What business have you in the channel, when you know no more than a cow about handling an oar?"

"That's right; blow me up, arter you've run me down and half-drowned me," retorted Dick, for it was that precious individual. "Ain't you got a cook-stove somewhere handy, where I can git my French broadcloth dried?"

"We had best stand in and put him ashore," suggested Joe Turner to the captain.

"No hurry 'bout that," said Dick. "I want to git dried fu'st. You kin drop me out somewhere down the river. Don't be 'feared but I'll drop on my legs no matter where you fling me. I'm at home anywhere."

And the independent young rogue went below in search of a fire where he might dry his dripping clothes.

"Well, he's a queer customer," declared Captain Parker. "Where is the boat?"

"Oh! it was a rotten old shell," replied Turner. "It ain't worth picking up. And as long as the little villain is in no hurry about getting ashore we can land him at Chester."

"That will do, Joe, as long as he is so easily satisfied. He is a saucy-looking young villain."

Swiftly down the river sped the yacht, in front of the long, red lines of the city. She was an excellent sailer, and light as the wind was, her great spread of sail caught up every wandering puff, and turned it into rapid motion through the sunlit waters.

It was high noon before Dick again appeared on deck, thoroughly dried and renovated, for one of the men, with a soft spot in his soul, had taken the boy in hand, giving him a thorough rubbing from head to foot, and wringing out his wet clothes.

"There, I feel jist as neat as a new clothes-pin," announced Dick, cheerily, as he stepped into the open sun. "I'm in for a new bath though. This is my second trip overboard inside a week. S'pose I'll have another trip. Things allers goes by threes, you know."

It was not twenty minutes before he was hail-fellow with all the crew, from the captain down, his cheery independence of manner seeming to hit their fancies.

"Whereaway are you bound?" he asked the captain.

"To Boston."

"Bosting, hey! Where's Bosting?"

"Oh, miles and miles away, over the seas; further, I fancy, than you will sail this trip."

"Guess so. If I know myself, Philadelphia's my head center. Don't want to git too fur away."

For the next hour or two Dick continued to make himself at home on the Molly, investigating every part of the vessel, making friends with everybody, and keeping a keen eye open for any indication of a contraband cargo.

And down the broad Delaware the yacht glided, past green shores and the white lines of a low fort, past the flat, long island of Tinicum, till in the distance rose the roofs and spires of a small town along the river flats, and topping the low hills in the background.

"What do you call that placo, Cap?" asked Dick, with innocent curiosity.

"That is Chester."

"Chester? Yes, I've hearn tell of it. 'Tain't much oin' to stop there, Cap?"

"Guess so. Anxious to get ashore, Dick?"

"Kinder. Don't want to git too fur from head-quarters."

"How would you like to stay with us and learn to be a sailor?"

"Didn't I 'stinguish myself enough in that line when you ran me down? If I warn't an A1 Jack tar I'd never got aboard. Thought I'd done enough then to 'arn a medal or sich, or a pretty chain like that stickin' outer your vest pocket."

There was hardly the eighth of an inch of the chain in question visible, and Dick's notion of its beauty seemed to be largely guess-work.

"If you got that you would have medal and chain both," said the captain, laughing, as he drew the chain from his pocket.

It was a small, neatly-stamped bronze medal, the chain attached to it being twisted in a peculiarly odd fashion.

Dick's eyes danced as he saw it.

"That's jist the leather medal I've 'arn'd. Let me try it on."

And without waiting for an answer, he took it from Captain Parker's careless grasp and flung the chain round his neck.

"How's that for a set-off?" proudly. "Guess it becomes my style of beauty."

He turned his eyes carelessly toward the shore. The channel here closely approached the land, and the boat was not two hundred yards from shore. The breeze had freshened somewhat, and she was running rapidly down the channel. Several stone farm-houses rose some distance back from the shore. Chester had now loomed up into its full proportions, about half a mile distant.

"You have impudence enough to hang you, boy!" growled Captain Parker, half-angrily. "Give me back the medal."

"Tell me of it when you git it," he cried, tauntingly, and grasping one of the shrouds, he ran up, hand-over-hand.

"Catch me who can!" he sung out, in a minute, from near the mast-head.

But he was not to be left long in this fancied security. One of the sailors ascended the opposite shrouds, and Joe Turner commenced to climb those on which he stood, two-thirds way up.

"Bring him down here!" roared the captain. "I'll be shot if I don't make him a lesson for all young thieves!"

Dick looked keenly around. His position was getting too warm for comfort. The two pursuers were approaching dangerously near him. The light of a quick resolution broke across his face.

"Catch your rabbit first, Cap. Parker!" he shouted; "and when you git him you'd best b'ile him. Basting ain't good for a tender skin."

There was a quick spring that half-shook Joe Turner from the shrouds; a small body descended like lightning through the air, a loud splash in the water followed, and Dick disappeared from view.

A loud curse broke from the captain's lips.

"Quick! To the sheets! Down with your helm! Bring her round lively! I'll be hanged if I don't run the young hound down!"

But it took some time to get all hands at their posts to wear ship, and by the time the Molly came round she was five hundred yards away from Dick, who had appeared on the surface and was swimming lustily for shore.

For several minutes it was doubtful if he would succeed. The Molly took the wind on her own quarter and came on at a rapid pace.

But the bottom shoaled here rapidly, and they were obliged to suddenly haul off when they saw Dick with his foot on the bottom, less than fifty yards distant.

"Get out the boat!" cried one of the men; "we can catch him yet."

"You can catch a swallow on the wing!" was Turner's observation, as he saw Dick climbing the river-bank. "But we must have that medal back,

by hook or crook. Strike quick for Chester, and we will see what can be done!"

The last they saw of Dick he was standing upright on the bank, his finger to his nose indulging in some odd gyrations.

CHAPTER XVII.

DICK AMONG THE GHOSTS.

Dick's first impulse was to put some desirable distance between himself and his late friends on the Molly.

But a preliminary look over the bank satisfied him that there was no haste needed, as the yacht had resumed her down-river course, and there were no fears of immediate pursuit. He took out the medal and gazed at it with curious eyes.

"Worked a sharp traverse on Cap. Parker, I calculate," he thought, as he put his prize carefully away. "I'm 'feard he won't find it quite so easy to play his little game." But, this kind of thing is gettin' a leetle monotonous. Here I am as wet as a new herrin' a'g'in, and these durned new clothes are hangin' as light on me as a stepmother's blessing. What's the lay of the land hereaway?"

Dick stood in a clump of willows near the mouth of Ridley creek, that here made a sharp bend and ran at an angle into the river.

Only a short distance to the north stood the low frame buildings of the fishery. Their hauls had been made for the day, and the immense seine net was hung up on its framework to dry.

"Guess there's a cook-stove 'bout them shanties. I'm gittin' kinder hungry for a dry skin, and maybe they'll give me the tail end of a briled shad to wash it down."

Dick found no difficulty in getting both his requirements. His escape from the yacht had been seen by some of the men, and many were the curious questions asked him as he sat steaming before a hot fire.

The grateful warmth of the stove drew clouds of steam from his drenched clothes, and he sat toasting himself with deep enjoyment of life, while a kind-faced old fisherman put the half of a shad on to fry for him.

"I judge you're hungry," remarked the old fellow, as he sprinkled the fish liberally with salt. "We've got our insides to look after as well as our outsides. You're mighty young fry to be knocking around this way."

"Oh, I'm seasoned," protested Dick, laughing, as he turned another side to the fire. "Had pepper and salt rubbed inter me 'fore I war old enough to know beans from pumpkins. Guess I can hoe my own row."

"You're a cute one," acknowledged the old man.

"What's that place down the river?" asked Dick.

"That's Chester."

"Chester, hey? It's a sizable village. Fine country 'bout here, I reckon?"

"Yes, very good. The Effinger farm, across the railroad there, is a first-rate one."

Dick looked out the open door at the men who were busily engaged with their scaly and shining harvest. Some distance away, though not far back from the river, stood a white stone house, that had about it an unmistakable air of desertion.

"That a farm-house?" asked Dick, as he turned to dry the few remaining wet spots. "Looks as if the family weren't to home."

"The family there don't need shut windows or hot fires," answered the old man, mysteriously. "Hot nor cold don't hurt them."

"What do you mean?" asked Dick.

"Nobody ever saw them, but many has heard them," was the reply. "Ghosts keep that house."

"Ghosts!" echoed Dick, hands and eyes unlifted in wonder. "What, real hobblegoblins? Fellers that kick round the world with nothing on them, not even flesh or bones?"

"Just that kind."

"Well," cried Dick with a long breath. "Tell me all about them. If there's anything I like it's ghosts."

"There hasn't nobody never seen them," declared the old man, solemnly. "All there is is footsteps, and slamming of doors, and such like. And when you follow them up-stairs they're kicking up the same row down-stairs before you could say Jack Robinson."

"Nobody live there?"

"Live there! I bet not! The ghosts has got hold, and nobody cares to dispute their title."

"You ever been there?"

"I ain't taking none of that provender, boy. The world's big enough to hold me and the spirits too; but there ain't no house big enough to hold us both at once. I've seen lights and heard voices about the old house. That's enough for me."

"When? Late at night?"

"Yes, always after midnight."

"I dunno," observed Dick, rising. "I dunno, but as long as ghosts kin crowd inter keyholes and such, and don't take up no room, I don't see why me and a houseful of spirits can't crowd in together. Guess I'll go over and see if any of the folks is to home now."

"What? over there?" exclaimed the old man, in alarm.

"What's to hinder?" demanded Dick, coolly. "S'pose they're all in their coffins this time of day, anyhow. And if they weren't, what's the odds? Of'en heerd of ghosts skeering folks. Never heered of them hurting folks. Good-day, and much obleeged."

And Dick walked off with a swinging independence that caused him to be followed with admiration by the eyes of the fishermen.

Straight to the old house he went and disappeared within its portals. A dozen eyes followed him there, and several dozens of comments upon his youthful bravado succeeded.

But with the most sublime indifference to their opinions, Dick commenced his investigation of the haunted house.

It had been originally a stone farm-house, the walls substantially built, and the woodwork yet resisting the action of time, though the rains through the open windows had ridged and mildewed the floors, and frescoed the walls with countless stains.

The boy picked his way gingerly over the wet and slippery floors, passing through empty room after room, with nothing out of the ordinary anywhere visible.

"A high old shanty this to get up a ghost-story on!" decided Dick, uplifting his nose in contempt. "The idear of a sperit comin' all the way from t'other world to take boardin' in a rotten old crib like this. Don't stuff none of that down my throat. Cap. Parker didn't come here for no sich ridiculous stuff."

Dick continued his exploration, noticing traces of recent footsteps in the rooms, but deciding that they were those of some ghost-seeking visitors.

He descended to the cellars, down-stairs that were damp and slimy, and yielded like an elastic carpet to the foot.

There were two cellars. One extended under the front portion of the house, an oblong, rather narrow room, with thick stone walls. Back from this, on the north side of the house, extended a small square room. It was dark and musty, and seemed to have been formerly used for the storage of vegetables. These cellars passed under about half of the house, the remaining portion apparently being built on the bare ground.

"Had a kind of notion that the ghost story was an out-and-out sell," mused Dick, "got up by the counterfeiterers to drive folks from these diggin's. And what ghosts would want rummagin' among rotten 'taters and old soap-boxes gits me. But I guess I'm out of my reckonin' 'bout the counterfeiterers,

"Wouldn't be safe for them to try it on in a place like this. Hallo! what's that?"

Footsteps sounded on the floor above. The tones of voices came down to Dick's ears.

"Wonder if them's the ghosts?" he said grimly. "Guess I'd best look out for squalls."

The steps continued to move about the upper portion of the house. Finally they reached the cellar stairs and commenced to descend.

It was nothing ghostly that had thus startled Dick.

After Dick's escape the Molly had proceeded direct to Chester. Without loss of time Captain Parker, Joe Turner and a third person, a resident of Chester, had left the town and sought the spot where Dick had come ashore.

Arrived there, they easily learned from the fishermen what had occurred, and that Dick was now in the deserted house.

Overjoyed at their prospect of easily recovering the lost trinket, they hastened thither, and at once thoroughly explored the upper rooms. Finding nothing there, they descended to the cellar.

Captain Parker reached here first and looked anxiously around. To his intense disappointment Dick was not to be seen. The cellar looked utterly desolate and deserted. Turner proceeded to the dark wing leading from the main cellar. It was equally empty.

"Either the fishermen lied or the boy is half-witch," he muttered.

"He's all young devil!" growled Captain Parker. "I'll be shot if he hasn't flung us again!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DETECTIVE'S RECEPTION.

WE must leave Dick Darling awhile in his mysterious disappearance and pay a flying visit to Philadelphia, to the residence of our Government detectives, Jack Bounce and Will Frazer.

Somehow, we always find them at home, and in much the same position. Jack with his feet on the window-sill, in fat and hearty enjoyment of life, and Will in a lean fret about the desperate discouragements of business.

Not that they spend all their time thus. They are expert and active in their vocation, and are shrewdly working up the minor clues which they have so far gained from Dick. As yet, however, their success has not been great. Sol Sly, in particular, has taken warning from his temporary arrest, and has fallen back into the most correct man of business.

"It is deuced slow work, Jack," protested Will, pacing the floor in his uneasy way. "I know the Jew has something to do with it, but we can't nail him."

"The whole crew of them have taken fright for the present," was Jack's rejoinder. "Since that last note was offered they have gone back into their skins. They must have smelt a rat somewhere."

"Not they. I have just heard that it has been set afloat on the New York market. A full dozen of them have turned up in the banks, and the Lord knows how many of them are adrift."

"So much the better!" exclaimed Jack, rubbing his hands with satisfaction.

"How do you make that out?" Will sharply questioned.

"The more daring they are the better our chances, that is all. I don't like to see them drawing back into their holes."

Their conversation was interrupted by a knock upon the door. Will hastened to open it. It was a chambermaid, who announced:

"There's a lady in the rear parlor wishes to see you."

"Ah! a young lady?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. We will be there."

Jack looked with eyes of admiration on the beautiful face of the young lady who advanced a step to

meet them as they entered the parlor. She was seemingly too nervous to quietly await their entrance.

"You will excuse me disturbing you," she said, in a sweet voice. "I called upon you regarding a matter about which I have been rather uneasy."

"Certainly, miss. We shall be glad to help you," spoke out Jack gallantly, helping himself to a chair, while Will, with greater gallantry, handed one to the lady.

"I am told that you are Government detectives, and are concerned here in seeking out the counterfeiters who have issued so many false notes."

"We are. What can we do for you, miss?"

"Of course you are aware of the arrest of Mr. Spencer on the charge of being connected with these forgers?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"I believe—I know he is innocent," she continued, earnestly; "but I am not conversant with the particulars of the charge against him. Will you be kind enough to tell me if it is a very serious case?"

Her voice trembled as she spoke. Jack's face was full of kindly feeling as he replied:

"I am sorry, miss, that I do not know more about it. This arrest has been made by the Pinkerton officers. I do not put much faith in it."

"I thought you would know all about it," she said, falteringly. "And from what you know of the real criminals, from your long and close investigation, you can point suspicion in the proper direction; you can assure me that the evidence against him is of no value."

Jack coughed in an embarrassed manner, while Will had sudden business at the window, leaving his associate to explain the results of their researches.

A knock at the door was a welcome diversion. Will hastened to open it, and found the same chambermaid who had before knocked at their door.

"A letter for Mr. Frazer," she announced. "And there is a man down-stairs, sir, as wants to see you both."

"Very well. Tell him we will see him in a few minutes," answered Will, impatiently, partly shutting the door and hastening to open the letter.

"You know the charges against Mr. Spencer?"

"About the counterfeit notes being found in his rooms? Oh, yes."

"It has a serious look."

"But I know it must have been the work of some enemy," she cried, in an excited tone.

"Excuse me," interrupted Will. "This is a letter from Boston, Mr. Bounce."

"Ah! Any trace of the parties?"

"Yes; the whole story is true. Mrs. Milton still lives there. She was much excited by my agent's questions. She still mourns for her lost son. He could tell her nothing, of course. She may come to Philadelphia to see us."

"I am afraid we can tell her no more," Jack declared.

"The boy can. We must refer her to Dick."

"Excuse us for entering into a private conversation," apologized Jack to the lady. "It is another important matter in which we are interested. You think, then, that Mr. Spencer has been injured by an enemy?"

"I am sure of it!" she responded, excitedly.

"Have you any idea by whom?"

"I cannot say," she answered, more thoughtfully.

"Think a moment. Do you know any one who has expressed enmity, or who has seemed unfriendly to him?"

"I do not know that he is specially unfriendly," reluctantly. "He repeated some slanders against Mr. Spencer, and even used some vague threats. It was but a momentary spleen, though."

"Will you be kind enough to name this person?"

"It was Andrew Williamson."

"Mr. Williamson?" spoke a quick voice at the door, in a tone of great surprise. "Excuse me," said the speaker, entering. "The girl told me to come right

up; and I inadvertently overheard some of your words. What—Miss Andrews?"

"I am just going, Mr. Spencer," she said, rising, while her hand visibly trembled.

"I hope my thoughtless intrusion has not annoyed you. You spoke of slanders against me, and by Mr. Williamson?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, reluctantly.

"I know him," he replied. "He has seemed specially friendly to me."

"Who is this Mr. Williamson?" asked Jack Bounce.

"He is an attorney, whose office is at Fourth and Walnut."

"Have you any other known enemies?" asked Jack, as he made a memorandum of the address given him.

"I know of no others."

"You must not take a wrong impression concerning Mr. Williamson," remarked Miss Andrews, with nervous intonation. "I am sorry I used his name. He is a gentleman—hasty and prejudiced, perhaps, but, of course, incapable of anything criminal."

"There are many things of course to young ladies that are not of course to us doubting Thomases," Will Frazer reminded her.

"I must go now. I am obliged to you for your kindness. Good-day, Mr. Spencer."

Will politely opened the door for her. Harry Spencer stood irresolutely for a moment, then—saying hastily to the officers: "I will see you again"—hastened out after her.

Jack Bounce twisted himself round to look at Will, with a comical smile on his face.

"That's a kind of thing that don't often get in our way. A sort of pastoral poem."

They were surprised by a third knock at the door, and the reappearance of the irrepressible chambermaid.

"A lady wishes to see Mr. Frazer," she announced.

"Very well. Show her up."

In a few moments the new visitor entered.

She was a lady some fifty years of age. She was very richly dressed in black silk, and had about her a striking dignity of manner. In face she had once been very beautiful, and was still a markedly handsome lady. Lines of sadness deeply channeled her face, showing principally about the mouth and the deep-set eyes.

Jack Bounce hastened to hand her a chair.

"Thanks!" she replied, with dignity of tone.

"Which of these gentlemen is Mr. Frazer?"

"I am he," Will responded.

"You wrote to Boston lately, inquiring about a Mrs. Milton?"

There was an intense feeling in her tone.

"I did," he replied.

"I am Mrs. Milton."

CHAPTER XIX.

AN ANIMATED BARREL.

BACK again to Dick Darling leads the course of our "over true tale."

The parties who had felt so sure of finding him in the old house were obliged to swallow their disappointment as best they could. They stood awhile talking of what they would have done if they had only found him, and debating as to how best to continue their search.

Then one of them went heavily up the stairs. The other two remained talking for a minute.

"Is he in it?"

"No," said Captain Parker. "He is an agent in another business in which the old man is interested. Be careful with him."

"Of course I will," replied the other. "To-night, then."

"At what hour?"

"Midnight. Let us follow. He may suspect something. We will meet here at the time the ghosts walk."

With a laugh he led the way up the stairs in response to the voice of Joe Turner, who called out;

"What is keeping you two? Going ratting are you? It ain't such a pleasant old cellar."

"Taking another look round, that is all," was the reply.

Their footsteps sounded loudly in the empty rooms above. They seemed to leave the house with reluctance, as if their search had not been complete.

Nor had it been, for light steps echoed their heavy ones, and boyish eyes peered curiously through one of the open windows after the departing men.

"Call round this way when you come back again," cried out Dick, mockingly. "If I ain't to home I'll tell the folks to treat you well—to hot water and pitchforks. Let's see, that's Cap and Bricktop, sure enough, who's t'other? A well-built chap, good-lookin', black mustache. Wonde' if it ain't the critter that sent the express package?"

Dick's eyes continued to follow them, until they were out of sight from his point of view.

"Good-by. See you ag'in to night," he said, with a courteous wave of the hand. "I won't go back on the 'pointment, if you don't."

As if thinking that he had had enough of the haunted house for one day, he made his way out.

Then he proceeded to the neighboring town of Chester, where he spent a few hours investigating the place.

But a later hour of the night found him wending his way back toward the haunted house, whither we will precede him by a few minutes.

It was clear moonlight, the fields seemed bathed in silver, and a rich glow fell upon the rippling waters of the river.

Had any of the hard-worked fishermen but turned their eyes in that direction, they might have seen more than one ghostly figure advance toward the old house, and disappear within its portals.

The two figures which last slipped ghostlike into the old house seemed rather substantial for wandering graveyard sprites, and the tones of their voices had something decidedly human about them.

"Are the others in?" asked one, whose voice sounded decidedly like that of Captain Parker.

"Yes; a half-hour ago."

"Well, let's in."

They were now in the cellar, into which the light of the moon dimly penetrated.

They moved on into the square offset already mentioned, within which they disappeared. There was heard a peculiar knocking, and the sound of low voices. Then a creak as of hinges, a quick flash of light, and all grew dim and still again.

But now a strange thing occurred, that might have alarmed even these ghost-makers, had they seen it.

The old flour barrel, which had probably lain for years undisturbed and immovable in its corner, suddenly began to glide, with a slow motion and frequent intervals of rest, across the cellar.

Its motion was betwixt a hitch and a glide, but as silently made as befitted a decorous old flour barrel. This strange acrobatic feat continued until the whole length of the cellar was traversed, and the dark corner in its opposite extremity reached. Here it settled down into its former immobility.

Then came a new footstep on the floor above, and a cautious descent into the cellar below.

A substantial-looking specter moved quietly through the faint moonlight, and passed with a quick step into the darker alcove of the cellar, in full view of the ghostly old barrel.

There followed a peculiar system of signals, consisting of successive knocks upon what seemed a hollow portion of the wall, replied to by similar dull-sounding knocks, which seemed to come from within the wall.

A word was now spoken from within, answered by a password from the new-comer.

A creaking sound followed, and the vitalized barrel beheld with wooden wonder a portion of the stone

wall, as it appeared, swing open, letting out a quick flash of light from some secret place within.

A faint and peculiar series of sounds were also audible, as the new-comer passed quickly through the opening, and the wall closed and became firm and dark with all night's gloom again.

Something very like a chuckle came from the unseen lips in the comical old barrel, and it sprung into instant life, executing a sort of silent war-dance, or what might have been a triumphal waltz, across the cellar toward its old location.

It reached there in less time than it had occupied in its former journey, and now, instead of settling down again into the restfulness which should be enjoined by law upon all empty old barrels, it very quietly tipped over, showing the mortal form of a sturdy boy. This individual at once restored his temporary habitation to its former position, and then began a very cautious movement toward the cellar stairs. He soon gained the bottom of the stairs, up which he went until the open air was reached.

The boy now circled very quietly around the house as if in search of rays of light from some hidden windows.

He then crept with infinite caution through the open moonlight, putting the body of a tree between himself and the haunted house as quickly as possible, and not until he reached the railroad ridge at a considerable distance from the deserted mansion did he pause. Then a ringing laugh came from his lips.

"If this ain't a night's work that's worth a leather medal, then sell me for a king crab!" he ejaculated. "I've got them. They're jist like a 'skeeter between my thumb and finger, and if I don't squeeze the song out of them, then there's no such things as rats. Want Williamson to get in the trap first. Ain't satisfied with the mice while the rat's out. Bet I 'stonish Ned Hogan, and circumflusticate the two Government chaps. Talk about your detectives!—Dick Darling don't back down from the best of them!"

And with frequent bursts of laughter, Dick made the best of his way toward Chester.

CHAPTER XX.

A MEETING ON THE STAIRS.

"ONE moment, Miss Andrews," called Harry Spencer, as he quickly followed her from the room of the detectives. "I shall not detain you more than a minute. But I *must* speak to you. Come into the parlor a moment," he added, taking her irresolute hand.

Helen's fingers rested softly in his close grasp as he drew her forward to a seat on the sofa, finding no room for himself except very near her.

She quietly withdrew her hand as she queried:

"And now, Mr. Spencer?"

"Is it fair to ask what your errand was with the officers?"

"I would rather not refer to it."

"It concerned me, I know. You wished to inquire about me—you could have had no other errand."

"And if I did? Was it more than friendliness?"

She had unwittingly asked a leading question, to which he hastened to reply:

"Yes, it was more—much more! At least I believe—I hope—why should you interest yourself in me? And that is not all."

"What more is there?"

"You would have concealed it from me. It was but by chance that I heard of it."

"Of what, Mr. Spencer?"

"Of the fact that I owe my liberty to you," he cried enthusiastically. "I have learned that *you* are the unknown friend who provided my bail. Oh, Helen, can I ever repay you?"

"I could not bear to see my music-teacher go to prison," she softly replied. "I must be going now, Mr. Spencer."

"Give me but a moment more. I was unwittingly an eavesdropper just now. I heard you speak of Mr. Williamson."

"Yes," she doubtfully replied.

"Is he indeed my enemy? Why is he so?"

"I cannot answer."

"I know him well. He is always so pleasant to me."

"Then he is a hypocrite!" she exclaimed, "for he sought to injure you in my estimation. He has spoken of you as—" she hesitated.

"I know what you mean," he quietly replied. "He refers to a matter which I have had no occasion to mention to you, though I might have been sure some of my kind friends would. I am a gentleman, Miss Andrews, if there is a shadow of doubt upon my birth."

"I know it!" she hastily replied. "I know it well. Far be it from me to permit that to influence me against you. Worth, with me, is better than birth."

Her rapid disclaimer gratified him.

"Mr. Williamson is a suitor of yours?"

"Yes," was the reluctant reply.

"Not a favored one?"

"You are asking too much, sir."

"I know he is not," was his eager rejoinder. "I know it is jealous spite that is influencing him against me. He knew of your lessons with me. He knew—" he paused irresolutely, then quickly continued: "He knew that I loved you! But I cannot help saying that I love you—love you with every fiber of my being, every pulse of my soul! And if the prison cell should await me, I would go there with you in my soul, yielding the luster of a heaven to the barest dungeon walls."

She made no answer, but suffered her hand to rest in his for several minutes, her face pale and with a scared look. Then an expression of resolution came upon it, and she firmly said:

"While your foes are striving to crush you is not the time for your friends to desert you. Yet I cannot speak now. I can only say that I am not deeply offended at what you have said."

She rose and quietly departed, he accompanying her to the door with a face of supreme happiness.

But we must leave Mr. Spencer for the present and return to the parlor where Mrs. Milton has just announced herself to the two detectives.

They were somewhat startled on discovering who their lady-visitor was, particularly as it instantly occurred to their minds how illy prepared they were with the information she was likely to desire.

"I did not suppose that you would know of my inquiries," stammered Will Frazer, "or that you would come to Philadelphia on so slight a hope."

"I would go to the ends of the earth on as slight a hope," she responded, with deep feeling. "I heard of the inquiries that were being made. I made your agents tell me their purpose. I learned from them that they were employed by you, and that they personally knew nothing. There were hopes of the recovery of my dear, lost son. Oh, sirs! can you wonder that I hastened here? I that love him with a consuming love! I that have mourned him as worse than dead!"

Her voice shrilled and trembled with the strong feeling that moved her; her eyes looked up with the most heartfelt appeal to the officers.

Jack Bounce twisted himself uneasily in his chair.

"I wish we could help you, madam," he blurted out hastily. "I wish we knew more concerning your loss—"

"But you know something? You can help me to some clew? Oh, sirs, do not keep me in suspense."

"Yet we shall have to ask you to wait a few days," put in Will, with a sign to Jack, which the latter had no eyes to see. "We are working up the case. We wrote to Boston simply to know if our investigations were worth continuing."

"Could you doubt it? But you know not how I loved, how I have mourned my son. I am rich, I can well reward those who help me,

"We are not working for money, Mrs. Milton," said Jack, in utter disregard of all Will's looks. "There's a party who employed us to write that letter. He is not here at present, nor do we have the most remote idea where he is. It may be a week before we see him. In the mean time we are quite ignorant of his purpose in writing."

"Is he so secretive?" she asked, disappointed.

"He is but a boy. But he is a boy that prides himself in keeping his own secrets and in playing his own games."

"And I must wait, then?"

"It cannot be avoided," replied Jack. "Nor have I any idea how much the boy really knows. Be kind enough to leave us your address. We will communicate with you as soon as we have seen him."

"I am stopping at the Continental. But I shall come and see you every day. I shall not be able to endure waiting to hear from you. Who is this lad that knows so much; and that is able to employ experienced detectives?"

The two officers looked at each other, while a comical smile passed between them.

"You would be surprised to see him," responded Jack. "He is a veritable street gamin. How he learned anything about this matter the Lord only knows. But he is just as sharp as a steel-trap, and I would rather trust him than most men."

"I must wait then," she sighed, rising. "I had hoped more from this interview. I hoped too much, perhaps. The ill of a life-time is not to be cured in a day."

The old sad lines returned about her mouth, whence they had been driven by her energy and hopefulness.

"Be sure we will do all we can, Mrs. Milton," declared Jack, as he saw her to the door, and closed it carefully behind her.

Mrs. Milton went slowly down-stairs. Near the bottom of the stairs she met a gentleman coming up.

She lifted her head in a heavy manner, and encountered a pair of brown eyes fixed earnestly upon her. A strange feeling affected her as she looked eagerly into the face before her. Who was it? To whom did those eyes belong? she asked herself continually, as the handsome face photographed itself on her brain, like a picture from the far past.

And Harry Spencer went up the stairs with a feeling like that of the mariner, who has caught a fleeting glimpse of the Fortunate Islands, on which fate forbids him to land.

CHAPTER XXI.

DICK'S CAT GETTING OUT OF THE BAG.

MR. WILLIAMSON was taking a quiet stroll in Chestnut street that same afternoon when his quick eyes encountered a face that gave him a sudden start. He looked again keenly into the fine but sad womanly features before him.

He then quietly turned away.

"She here!" he said to himself, in deep surprise. "What could have brought her from Boston? I can think of but one cause; some new illusion about her son."

He followed her until he saw her enter the Continental Hotel.

"So far well," he thought. "She is safe for the present, but I must know what her object is. I wish Parker was here now. I must write to him at once. And now I had best see Mother Shipton."

This resolution was suddenly taken, and he turned with a rapid step to execute it. Sharp as he was, he had failed to observe two persons who had watched the whole by-play of his recent movements. One of these was Ned Hogan, with his sign hung out in the shape of his inevitable meerschaum. The other was Dick Darling, as well marked by a peculiar feature of his attire. The frequent wettings his new suit had received had proved too much for its powers of resistance. It had shrunk upon him until now the clothes seemed a part of his skin, and the unsolved mystery was how he had got

into them, and how he was ever going to get out of them. Dick could not have answered himself, as he had not been out of his clothes since his last two dips overboard.

"Now's our time," he said, quickly. "That cove's my game. Wish I knowed who the woman was. Let's arter him; there's somethin' afloat."

They kept within full view of Williamson for several squares. The streets became less frequented, and they found it advisable to fall further back, barely keeping him in sight.

"We are on the track of somethin'," announced Dick. "I've followed this cove twenty times afore, and I've noticed whenever he's on some deep lay he's jist as cautious as a fox. Look how he keeps his eyes goin'! He cotched me once at it. Bet he don't again."

They were now in a very disreputable part of the city. There were here a number of small streets noted for the horrible filth and iniquity of their inmates—the leprous spot in a great city.

Williamson turned quickly into one of these side streets, after glancing warily around. His two pursuers ran rapidly forward to the corner of the street in which he had disappeared.

He was just entering a tumble-down frame house—or hut would be a better name—about half-way down the street.

"You stay here, Dick," said Hogan. "I will find out who lives there."

He advanced and entered into conversation with the officer who had charge of this unpleasant beat.

It was ten minutes before he returned.

"I'll swear I don't know what a well-dressed man like him wants in such a hole," he averred.

"Mebbe I know who lives there," answered Dick.

"Oh, an outrageous old crone, whom the folks in these parts christen Mother Shipton. She makes her money by begging, or generally by sending some baby out to whine for her. She is said to be never short of a new baby, if one happens to drop off."

"Then she's my meat!" cried Dick, joyfully. "It's a hundred-dollar job we've struck to-day. I'll let you inter what I'm arter soon, Hogan. Jist take another short walk with me."

Ned grew somewhat restive over Dick's persistent mysteriousness. But he was excessively anxious to know what the boy was after, and Dick would not let out a word; so he perforce accompanied him.

Their way led now to Arch street, and ended at the hotel patronized by the Government detectives.

"Misters Bounce and Frazer in?" asked Dick, in his independent manner, of the clerk.

"I don't know," was that individual's short answer. "You might find them in their room."

"Come ahead, then, Hogan. I've blazed the way before."

"Who are these men, Dick?" asked Hogan, as they ascended the stairs.

"A brace of Government chaps. You oughter know them."

Before Hogan could ask any more questions, Dick had abruptly opened the door of the parlor in question, and walked in, suddenly breaking off a close conference between Harry Spencer and the officers.

"Back ag'in, you see," was his free-and-easy greeting. "How do, Mr. Spencer? Didn't 'spect to meet you here."

"I wish you had been back a half-hour sooner," said Jack.

"What for?—but stop jist a minit. Want to interduce you to Mr. Edward Hogan. 'He's one of Pinkerton's—Mr. Hogan, this is Mr. Jack Bounce and Mr. Will Frazer; two gen'lemen in Government service. Hope you'll know one another."

This introduction was made with great grandiloquence of tone, and a graceful wave of the hand.

Dick, however, hardly gave them time to acknowledge his formal introduction before he was at them again with questions.

"What did you want me for a half an hour ago?"

"The Boston party—"

"There, that will do. Drop it right there," ejaculated Dick, with a quick glance at Spencer. "The Bosting job will keep. 'Tain't that we're runnin' now. Got a little pressin' bizness with you officers. Ain't interruptin' you?" he asked Harry.

"No. We were about through," replied the latter, with a smile at Dick's peremptory manner.

"When does that little affair come up?"

"What little affair?" asked Harry, in surprise.

"You oughter know, as long as it's *your* job—that little trial bizness."

"That trifling affair will take place to-morrow," confessed Harry.

"The blazes it will!" was Dick's energetic answer.

"That won't do, nohow. Can't you boost her over? Slide her on a few days more? 'Spect to have some witnesses for you, but ain't got them ready yet."

"It might be done," returned Harry, smiling.

"Do your purtiest," demanded Dick, positively.

"You'll find I ain't in fun. I've got the trumps in my hand to save you from Cherry Hill; but they ain't quite ready to play yit."

"I shall do my best, then, Dick."

As soon as the door closed Dick turned to the officers.

"Now let's hear 'bout Bosting," he said. "Didn't want Harry Spencer to hear it."

"Boston is all right," answered Jack. "Mrs. Milton has been found; and what is more, she is here now, and anxious to have an interview with you."

"That's the way with wimmen; they're too cur'us. Why couldn't she stay till she was sent for? You jist tell Mrs. Milton that I ain't wisible yit. An' tell her, if she wants to amuse herself waitin', she mought 'tend the trial of one Harry Spencer for counterfeitin'. Tell her to keep her eyes open and see if she reckernizes *anybody* in the court."

"All right," said Jack.

"And now to biz."

He helped himself to a chair beside the center-table, and deliberately drew several papers from his pocket, which he spread out upon the table.

"Look at that, Ned Hogan. 'Ever see it afore?"

It was the torn envelope of a letter he pushed toward Hogan.

"Why, it is addressed to me," cried the latter.

"That's so. Know the writin'?"

"It is familiar. Yes, it is the envelope of the letter I received from Chester, telling me that Harry Spencer would go there the next day, and have a conference with a red-haired man. This was the first hint of his being connected with the counterfeiters. The letter put me on his track."

"And the envelope put me on a better track. It was a sharp game they played to send him on a fool's errand to Chester, and you after him; and while he was gone old Sol Sly of South street, stuffed a pack of counterfeits in his drawers. You see, I twig the whole game."

The officers looked at each other, with the light of a dawning intelligence in their eyes.

"And how about the medal that you say Sol stole?" asked Will.

"Got it here," responded Dick, tapping his pocket.

"Worked the traverse on them."

"Spencer had a long conference with the red-haired man at Chester," Hogan declared.

"Know all about *that*," interrupted Dick.

"'Tweren't counterfeitin'. Tell you sometime, soon, what 'twas about."

"Very well. Come back to the envelope, then."

"You folks oughter be good judges of writin'. Put that and that together, and see what you make of them."

He pushed an open letter beside the envelope.

The officers bent closely over them for a minute.

"They are undoubtedly the same handwriting," declared Jack, in a positive manner. "There is no attempt at disguise here. Go on, Dick. This is gettin' interesting."

"Got a little story to tell you," and Dick spread

himself before the three curious officers. "You see I knowed Harry Spencer, and when I see'd that letter tryin' to git him snatched, I bet to myself it was writ by one of the gang—one that didn't like him. Now, I happened in a stationery store in Chestnut street a day or two afore when a stranger come in to order some paper. He took some envelopes with him that had a curious water-mark. I know they talked a good deal 'bout it, and he wanted the paper of the same kind. Jist hold that envelope ag'in' the light."

"I see," said Jack; "an eagle with a serpent in his claws."

"Precisely. When Ned Hogan got the letter, I see'd that the envelope looked like the same; so I jist looked through it, and twigged the eagle and snake."

"And what followed?"

"I did—I follered to the stationery store, and follered him off with the paper. He shook me, but I got on a lay that pulled me through. I found he were a friend of Sol Sly, and that he were after the same gal with Harry Spencer. And I knowed that jealousy was a reg'lar tiger. Been to the theater, and seen Otheller."

"And who is Andrew Williamson?" asked Will, his eyes full of absorbing interest.

"He's a lawyer at Fourth and Walnut. And that ain't ail. He's head cook of these counterfeiters, or else I'm the cheapest sold Jack that ever went off for a penny."

"You haven't told all you know."

"Not by a jug full. I'm only waitin' to nail Andy Williamson so tight that the law can't drag him through. I know the head-quarters of the gang is at Chester. I know he got a package of notes by express from Chester, which he set adrift on the market. And, finally, I know jist where the queer stuff is manufactured, and I'm only waiting for the king bee to get in the hive afore I snatch the whole caboodle! That's what I want Spencer's trial put off for. Want to wait till Williamson goes to Chester, and then spring the trap on the whole gang. And I want you three folks, and about half a dozen more, to take a hand in it. Best bring a few bullets, and a trifle of gunpowder too. It'll maybe be hot work."

"I tell you what," put in Will Frazer, quickly, "there's the steam yacht at the Navy Yard. I can get the use of that and its crew."

"That's the dodge!" cried Dick, with a joyful intonation. "Want you to bespeak it this very day. Can't tell what night we mought want it. When the iron gets hot we've got to strike. And hard, too."

"All right. I shall see that it is ready."

"And now, feller-citizens," said Dick, with a comical look at his garments, "I ain't been in the bosom of my family for a week, and ain't had these trowsers off for 'bout the same time. Want to get a good holt with my bootjack up 'bout my waist, and see if I can't peel."

"Those clothes are not fit for you to wear, Dick," suggested Jack, after the laugh had subsided.

"Why don't you get a new pair of pants?"

"Ain't got no generous friend in the clothin' line," responded Dick. "And money's kinder run down with me."

"Oh! that's the state of affairs! Here is a ten, Dick. Help yourself to a new rig."

Dick took the money with scant thanks, and he departed, leaving the officers in a deep consultation.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SIGNAL GIVEN.

Dick's desires and Harry Spencer's efforts were not crowned with success. No reason satisfactory to the court could be given why the trial should be postponed, as Dick's true reasons were jewels too precious to be given to the public.

The case was therefore called in due order on the day at first named for it.

The case for the prosecution was very simple.

Ned Hogan was the chief witness, as having arrested Spencer and found in his private drawers the package of counterfeit notes which were such serious evidence against him. Then there was the journey to Chester, and the letter which pointed so closely at a guilty connivance with the forgers.

Harry's lawyer had not succeeded in getting all the rebutting evidence he should have had. He had not sought it in the right quarters, and knew nothing of the whereabouts of the red-haired man, who was so prominently mixed up in the affair, nor of the temporary arrest of Sol Sly for his strange proceedings in Spencer's house.

Hogan, of course, was aware of all these facts, but was not at liberty to divulge them while Dick's plans hung fire, as they at present did.

During its progress Jack Bounce entered, accompanied by Mrs. Milton, whom he succeeded in helping to a comfortable seat in the rear portion of the court-room.

Near by her was another well-dressed, young looking lady, so deeply veiled that no feature of her face could be distinguished, but who seemed to take an absorbing interest in the prisoner and in the evidence.

Jack had only partly obeyed Dick's directions. He had not told Mrs. Milton for what purpose he brought her here, simply saying he had been requested to do so by the party who had employed him. He preferred to see if she would discover anything without previously formed expectations.

"Why have you brought me here?" she asked, at length, of her escort. "This is very wearisome to me."

"I can't say," Jack stolidly replied. "I am only obeying orders. Look about the room a bit and you may find something to interest you."

It was with a sad smile that she followed his directions, her eyes wandering in a desultory fashion over the oddly diversified faces that made up the audience of the court-room.

Jack was listening to some prolix statements, of no possible importance, drawn from a witness by persistent questioning of the lawyer, when he felt a sudden, almost fierce, clasp upon his arm, and heard a quick whisper in his ear.

"Who is that?" The words were given in a sort of gasp.

"Where?" he asked, following the direction of her pointing finger.

"There! behind the railing."

"That is Harry Spencer, the prisoner, the party who is being tried."

"But who is he? His face thrills me with such a strange feeling! Can it be—" she paused, while her eyes eagerly devoured every lineament of his face.

"He is a music-teacher by profession," explained Jack. "He has fallen into trouble, though I fully believe him innocent."

"Innocent! Could guilt rest there?" pointing earnestly to the open and ingenuous face of the prisoner. "But you know more of him. I met him on your stairs yesterday. I felt then that he must be my lost son. I seem to gaze upon my husband, restored to life and to youth again."

"I know nothing more," returned Jack, evasively.

Mrs. Milton said no more, but she had suddenly acquired the deepest interest in the case, and her eyes continued to rest on the face of the prisoner with a devouring intensity.

The hour of three came and passed, and the case for the prosecution was just ended. Under these circumstances the judge adjourned the court, giving the defense until the next day to prepare their evidence in rebuttal.

The court-room was nearly emptied ere Mrs. Milton could remove her eyes from the face which had so deeply engrossed her. She turned away with a deep sigh, and left the room, accompanied by her escort.

"What will they do with him?" she quietly asked. "Will they send him to prison?"

There was deep feeling in her quiet voice.

"They cannot, since they have accepted bail for his appearance," answered Jack, though not at all sure in his mind whether the alderman's bail-bond would be respected by the court at this serious stage of the case.

Jack's attention was at this moment called by another touch upon his arm. It was the small shrewd face of Dick Darling that now appeared at his shoulder, but full of an eager light.

"Tell Will Frazer to fire up the yacht *instantly*!" he commanded, in a deep whisper. "The music's goin'. The fox has headed for his hole, and it's 'bout time the hounds were out. You must be on the river by dark. If things go right we'll bag the whole gang."

"That's good news! One minute, Dick."

"Mrs. Milton," announced Jack, in a decided tone. "This antiquated young gentleman is our employer in your affairs."

"This boy?" and Mrs. Milton looked with doubtful eyes upon Dick.

"This Mrs. Milton?" demanded Dick.

"Yes."

"Got some bizness with *you*, ma'am. Won't say nothin' to-day. That's sot. But maybe you'll reckonise this."

He held up in his hand the medal, with its curious chain.

"Great Heaven!" cried the mother, snatching it from his hand. "It is my son's! Oh, sir! Where is he? Take me to him and you shall receive a mother's deepest blessings."

"They'll keep till to-morrow," announced Dick positively. "This is a bizness that can't be put through in a minit, and in a public place like Independence Square. Come, Mr. Bounce. Our bizness won't wait. Mrs. Milton kin keep the medal till I see her ag'in. Be mighty keeful of it."

"Thank you," said the deeply affected mother, seizing and pressing his hand warmly. "You have given me more happiness than I have felt for a lifetime."

But the irrepressible boy hurried Jack off.

We will not here enter into the details of the long conference that ensued between Dick and his trio of detectives.

Suffice it to say that as a consequence thereof a small, swift steam yacht, known as the *Lightfoot*, stole quietly out of the Navy Yard at about the hour of nine that evening, and moved down the river.

There were on board our three officers, and six or eight other persons, but no trace of Dick Darling.

The night was far advanced toward midnight when they arrived at a point in the river at a short distance above Chester, and slowly steamed up and down, well out from shore, their eyes fixed keenly upon the land.

"Ain't it high time we were hearing from our scout?" asked Hogan, impatiently, as a clock on board struck the hour of twelve.

"Dick's likely waiting to get all the birds in the cage," Jack explained.

A half-hour more passed of this uneasy suspense and then there appeared on shore a faint flash, as of a match which had been lit and instantly extinguished. Again and again the flash broke out.

"That's the signal!" cried Jack, joyfully. "Put her head ashore!"

In ten minutes more they had all landed on the low wharf at the fisheries, the suddenly wakened fishermen starting up in wonder.

"That's your sort!" cried Dick Darling, suddenly appearing from the gloom. "Foller me! But as silent as a regiment of mice!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

A BIG HAUL.

THE silver rim of the moon had lifted itself, a half-hour before, above the dark Jersey horizon, and it now poured its mist-shrouded beams in a faint flood upon the restless surface of the river, and lit up the

foreground with a dim luster that brought out all objects in relief.

"Don't you be bothering yourselves," cried Dick to the fisherman. "'Tain't shad we're arter, *this* time. But maybe one of your *nets* mought come in handy, for 'spect to make a haul of big fish; reg'lar sturgeons of fellers. We're goin' for the ghosts."

Cautiously the dark line moved toward the deserted mansion, which rose, magnified by the faint moonlight, like a dun castle upon their path.

"Got them bagged," whispered Dick to the officers. "The whole caboodle. Been on the watch ever since dark."

The portal of the haunted house was reached. The empty rooms glowed with a forbidding look upon the intruders.

After some last whispered directions to his followers, the chief of which was an injunction to silence and to be ready with their weapons, Dick led the way forward.

The rooms were too dark for strangers to make their way with the caution necessary, and the light of a dark-lantern was flashed forward along the hall, illuminating the narrow track along which they were slowly creeping.

"Carefull!" whispered Dick. "Here's the stairs we're to go down. They're slippery. Put your feet down hard, but not noisy."

He led the way as silently as a specter. In fact, if any of the occasional visitors to the ghost-ridden mansion had been now present, they would have vowed they saw a host of its uncanny inmates, moving onward like shadows, without the sound of a footfall.

The cellar reached, Dick grew doubly cautious.

Taking the lantern he searched along the wall in which he had seen the door opened. It seemed all alike, a series of roughly-squared stones, with mortar between. The door was so deftly made that no one without previous reasons for suspicion would have deemed that it was a mere imitation of the wall before which Dick now paused.

There was a slight line running irregularly up and down between the apparent layers of stone, to all appearance an old crack in the wall.

But the shrewd boy who now stood before it had the best of reasons for knowing better. Making a sign of caution and readiness to his followers, he took a short crowbar from the hands of the nearest of the men. He then closed the lantern and handed it back to the same man.

They were now in almost utter darkness. Silence too, twin-born with darkness, reigned around them. Yet now there was a faint sound that seemed to come through the wall, a sound no more obtrusive, except to sharpened senses, than was the excessively faint suspicion of moonlight that penetrated to those gloomy depths.

Their alert ears were startled when Dick, with the end of the bar, gave two light knocks upon the concealed door. All remained silent. Even the faint sounds they had heard ceased to be audible.

Again he signaled; this time with four knocks given in deliberate succession. So far there had not been a particle of positive evidence to Dick's followers that they had not been made fools of. They had seen or heard nothing definite, and only had his story to base their faith upon.

This doubtfulness was sharply dispelled. From within the wall, in answer to Dick's second signal, came the faint sound of two blows, as audible as a pistol-shot would have been to their acute senses.

Dick's reply was with two similarly given blows.

A moment's silence. Then the tones of a voice were heard. It seemed to come through miles of earth, so faint and far-off was the sound. Yet the words were perfectly distinct.

"Who goes?"

"Siloam," answered Dick, with his lips close to the door.

The next moment there came a kind of crackling sound. A line of light broke through the apparent

crack in the walls. The mysterious door was thrown half-open, letting out a sudden flash, and revealing to the eyes of the observers a number of human forms within a well-lighted room beyond.

A half-dozen hands caught the partly open door, flinging it open so suddenly that the man who had been holding it from within was flung abruptly out against the opposite wall.

The scene within was a striking one. It was a room of some twenty by ten feet in dimensions, a portion of it being occupied by a table, which was covered by engravers' tools, with steel plates finely cut, and with quantities of printed bank-notes. In another portion was a hand printing machine; in another, a small forge. In fact, every necessary detail of their nefarious business surrounded the group of men, who had sprung up in startled surprise at this abrupt invasion of their domain.

Several oil-lamps depended from the ceiling, their light shining on faces pallid with sudden fright. And well might they be, for they looked into the muzzles of a dozen revolvers, and into as many resolute faces behind them.

"At them, men! Fire on them! Eurst through them!" cried one of the counterfeiters, a handsome, determined-looking man. "On your lives, don't be captured!"

He sprung to the side of the room, out of sight of the officers.

But Dick's followers were two to one of the forgers. Before the latter could make any concerted movement for defense, they were seized by stalwart men and bound.

"How's this?" cried Dick, suddenly. "There was six fish in the pond, and there's only four in the net. Where's Andy Williamson and Cap. Parker?"

"Williamson?" asked Jack Pounce.

"Yes, that's the chap that told them to fight; and he's cut stick hisself."

Dick looked hastily around for means of escape.

"Here it is!" cried one of the men. "Up the big chimney here. There's a ladder in it."

"By thunder! that's so!" yelled Dick. "Out with you! Tumble out! Roll out! If they git away, we'll be the cheapest sold coons ever brung to market."

Dick set the example by dashing into the outer cellar, and going up the stairs three at a step.

He was followed closely by the others except such as had charge of the prisoners.

But quick as they had been, the fleeing criminals had been quicker. They had already escaped from the house, and were dimly visible in the misty moonlight about two hundred yards off.

"After them!" cried Ned Hogan, eagerly. "We can catch them yet."

"You can't do it," cried Dick. "Back! all of you! Let Hogan follow them. We've better fish to fry."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Will Frazer, in harsh revolt from Dick's leadership.

"I mean this," returned Dick, decidedly. "I'm runnin' this machine, and I know what's what. Do you s'pose you could beat them to Chester? You couldn't do it. There they've got the yacht Molly, and 'll be off shore quicker'n greased lightning. How'll you ketch them then? Swim for them, hey?"

"What better?" asked Will sternly.

"What's better? Why, the steamer. Hogan's the chap for them if they try to double in Chester; he'll get help enough. The steamer's our game."

"Right as a trivet, Dick," put in Jack, slapping him heartily on the shoulder. "Put your prisoners on board, under hatches."

"Jist so. Let Mr. Frazer and one or two men stay here, and look after the plunder. The rest of us—"

"Will take to the Lightfoot, and then, hey for the Molly!" cried Jack.

Dick's ideas were at once put into effect. The prisoners were brought up and secured on board the steamer. The others hurried on board.

The moon broke clearly from her misty veil, and poured a strong light upon the rippling river, as the steamer moved out into the broad stream.

With a full head of steam, the light craft made rapid headway down the river, keeping close inshore as the channel would permit.

They were yet a quarter of a mile above the Chester pier, when they saw what appeared in the moonlight a great winged bird, wheel suddenly out into the stream, and commence a rapid flight down the river.

"It's the Molly!" announced Dick, excitedly; "and she's got jist her wings. Let out, lads. Burn rosin, or coal-'ile, if wood won't answer."

And now in utter silence the chase continued, the swift-moving steamer rapidly closing up the distance between the two vessels. The Molly made a brave effort to escape.

But she was far overmatched in speed, and it was not many minutes before the dark prow of the steamer forged rapidly up upon her quarter.

Until then deep silence had been preserved on both sides. Now a stern voice came from the deck of the Molly.

"What do you mean by this chase? Back water, or I'll fire!"

"Fire and be blowed!" was Jack Bounce's energetic rejoinder.

The speaker was as good as his word. A bullet ranged the deck of the steamer, fortunately doing no damage.

In a minute more the two vessels were firmly clasped together by means of boat-hooks.

"Now we'll answer your shot!" cried Jack, as he leaped aboard the Molly.

The tall form of Williamson confronted him, pistol in hand, and a dangerous look in his eye.

He took a quick aim and pulled the trigger. It would have fared ill with Jack Bounce at that moment but that a light form had leaped on board beside him, and threw up the pistol-arm of the desperate man.

The bullet sped far above the head of the officer. Before the shot could be repeated Jack's stalwart fist had struck the villain a square blow in the face. He went down like an ox before the ax of the butcher.

Captain Parker and the crew of the yacht rushed with hastily-seized weapons to the aid of their leader, but after a few moments' severe struggle they were all overpowered, securely bound and placed on board the Lightfoot. In five minutes more the two vessels were put about, and headed up the moonlit river.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DICK'S EVIDENCE.

It was the day succeeding that in which such stirring and important events had occurred. The trial of Harry Spencer had been resumed and had gone on for an hour with a rather lame line of defense.

The veiled lady auditor of the previous day had resumed her position, and was a deeply-interested listener to the somewhat prolix case, the lawyer eking out the thinness of his testimony by a multitude of questions.

At this stage of the case the door of the courtroom opened, and three or four men pushed themselves into the already crowded room.

One of these made his way to the legal inclosure.

The stranger, who was no other than Jack Bounce, sat and whispered eagerly for several minutes with the lawyer. The latter lost all interest in the cross-questioning, and his face lit up with a new light.

"That will do," he said to the witness, just released from the badgering of the Commonwealth's attorney.

He turned and spoke to the crier, whose voice rung out through the court-room:

"Solomon Sly!"

There was a movement near the door of the courtroom, and the attenuated form of the Jew could be seen slowly making his way to the witness stand.

After the preliminary questioning, the question was asked:

"Were you not alone in Mr. Spencer's house on the afternoon of April 4th?"

"I called to see him," said the witness, reluctantly. "He was not in."

"Were you left alone in the parlor?"

"Yes, the girl thought he might be in soon."

"How did you occupy yourself while there?"

"Looking over a book," responded the witness, hesitatingly.

"Speak plainly, sir; you will save yourself from worse trouble hereafter. Did you remain in the parlor?"

"No, sir," protested the witness, growing still paler.

"Where did you go?"

"To a small room that had a bookcase and desk. It seemed used as an office."

"What did you do while there? Did you put anything in the desk?"

"Yes," stammered the witness.

"What was it?"

"A package of papers."

"Or of counterfeit bank notes?"

"I cannot say. I did not examine it."

"For what purpose was it put there?"

"I was ordered to do so."

"By whom?"

The witness again hesitated.

Jack Bounce spoke rapidly for a moment with the lawyer.

"That will do," he said, suddenly, turning to the witness. "You may go down now; but remain in the court. You will probably be wanted again."

The deepest interest was now manifested in the case. These few answers had put such a different aspect upon it that it was evident to all that the accused was the victim of a conspiracy.

"Richard Darling!" called the crier.

"Here," echoed a distant voice, and the small form of Dick could be seen making his way to the witness stand.

Dick came up with his peculiar walk, which was not quite a swagger, yet was full of the spirit of independence.

The oath was administered then the lawyer asked.

"What is your name?"

"You oughter know. That feller just sung it out. I'm generally Dick Darling!"

"Where do you reside?"

"Where do I hang out, do you mean? 'Most any where. A cellar door's comf'ble bed this hot weather. And I pick up my vittals indiscriminate."

"But you have *some* home. I wish the street and number of your residence."

"It is home where the heart is," replied Dick. "Mine's 'most anywhere where there's a bit of fun or a free fight."

After some more of this sparring they at last succeeded in gaining the important fact concerning Dick's residence.

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?"

"Know Mr. Spencer? Reckon I do. He's jist the wu'st lied-on gentleman I ever knew."

"State to the jury what you know concerning the counterfeit notes found in his house."

"I know it's a blamed fraud."

"That is not a proper answer. I wish you to state any definite facts you may know about them."

"'Bout who? The counterfeiters?"

"Do you know anything about them?" asked the lawyer, quickly.

"I know the names of the whole gang. I kin p'int you out where all the queer stuff is manufactured. And what's wu'ss, I kin tell where the whole durned tribe of them are this minute."

The judge himself started on his seat in surprise at this announcement. A murmur of excitement ran round the circle of auditors.

"That is just what we are all anxious to know," declared the lawyer. "Where are they?"

"The whole rascally caboodle of them are in Moyamensing!"

The boy's manner was dramatically impressive as he gave this answer. But the unlooked-for statement needed nothing to make it impressive.

"Does any one here know if what the boy says is true?" demanded the judge.

"It is true," replied Jack Bounce. "They were locked up within the last hour."

"But how is this? I supposed the operations were still a mystery. When and by whom were they discovered and captured? Who are they?"

"The witness can answer it as well as I—better for that matter," responded Jack.

"What do you know about this important capture?" demanded the lawyer, of Dick.

"I war there! Reckon I took a hand in it!"

"Relate to the court the whole circumstances."

The audience in the court-room crowded densely around the railing, mouths and ears open, eager to swallow the exciting particulars of this astonishing statement.

But Dick's modesty stood in the way of any direct answer to this question, and he evaded the subject by saying:

"Tain't them that's on trial now. It's Mr. Spencer. Ax what you please 'bout him, and I'm on hand. Ain't ready to go outside of the case."

"But who are these men that are captured?"

"There's a set of third-class rogues and one first-class rascal," responded Dick, impressively. "Guess the first-classer is the only chap that's got anything to do with *this* bizness before the court. He's the one that's down on Harry Spencer, and that hired old Sol Sly to stuff his drawers with counterfeits."

"Will you give his name?"

"It's Andy Williamson, the lawyer."

The exclamations this time were confined to the lawyers, but they were deep and long continued.

Or not entirely confined to the lawyers, for there was one low, distressed cry of that incisive character that makes itself heard above all other sounds. It seemed to come from the veiled lady who sat on one side of the room, and whose hands were clasped in nervous agitation.

"This is an outrage!" cried the prosecuting attorney, excitedly rising. "Mr. Williamson is in honorable standing in this court. It is not right to let this boy run on with such ridiculous perjuries."

"Reckon I swore to it!" averred Dick. "Somehow the *truth* is allers ridic'ous to you lawyers. You don't want truth. A good sound lie generally suits you better'n anything else but a big fee. *That's* your lay every time. But you've got ter swaller truth *now*, whether yer likes it or not. Andy Williamson's in quod, whether it gives you the tooth-ache or no. You kin bring back Sol Sly now. I reckon he won't be 'feared *now* to tell what his papers was, and who hired him to put them where he did. When *that's* done you can give our lied-on friend a boost out of that box. And then Jack Bounce here kin tell you the whole bizness."

Harry Spencer's eyes lit up with a new light at this proposition from his young friend, for he felt keenly the disgrace of his position. During the whole day he had kept his eyes persistently from that part of the court-room where sat the veiled lady. He seemed to know instinctively what face lay behind that close veil.

After some busy whispering among the lawyers, Dick's advice was taken, and Solomon Sly recalled.

This individual was quite crestfallen at the turn events had taken, and well disposed to turn State's evidence. He acknowledged now that he had received the package from Williamson, and that he believed it contained counterfeit notes.

After asking the protection of the court, he proceeded to make a clean breast of his connection with the forgers, and how he had been engaged by them as one of the distributors of their counterfeit money.

He knew nothing further of their operations, and

knew none of the gang except Williamson, who had kept himself well supplied.

At this juncture, without taking further evidence, the attorney for the defense rested his case, and gave it in a short but strong speech to the jury.

The latter body did not leave their box, and needed but a minute's consultation to pronounce the prisoner "not guilty."

There was a moment of excited whispering in the room, and faces and hands of warm sympathy were extended to Harry Spencer as he left the dock a free man, after his most perilous struggle with a dark conspiracy against him.

He proceeded as rapidly as sympathizing friends would permit to the place occupied by the veiled lady. Here he seated himself, taking her hand in an earnest clasp, and whispering a few words in her ear, which she seemed to return with equal earnestness.

But a new turn was now given to the attention of the court by the voice of the judge, who asked:

"And now that the court stands adjourned from this trial, will Mr. Bounce—to whom we have been referred by our youthful witness—satisfy the curiosity of us all in giving an account of how these mysterious forgers were captured?"

"I shall be happy to do so as far as lies in my power," answered Jack.

Jack made a long but very interesting story of it, and wound up with a warm tribute of compliment to Dick.

"S'pose we drop all that," said this latter personage, impatiently. "I've got a bit more of work cut out for *you*, Mr. Bounce, afore this thing gits out."

"What is that?" demanded Jack, quickly.

"We've only got the makers of this queer money. Now, there's a half a dozen *pushers* of it in this here town, 'sides Sol Sly. I kin put my fingers on four of them in a minit's warnin'. Git a force of four or five perlice at wunst, and come with me. There ain't a minit to be lost. If the newspapers git it once, the jir's up."

Dick sprung from his seat as Jack came promptly forward in response to his summons. On passing from the court he stopped a moment beside Harry Spencer, and said in a lowered voice:

"Meet me at the lady's entrance to the Continental, say 'bout three o'clock this afternoon. Don't miss. There's bizness afloat."

Harry had not got over his surprise at this appointment ere Dick and his confrere were gone.

Their raid was successful. Within two hours afterward four others were added to the list of prisoners under arrest.

CHAPTER XXV.

LOVE WAITS NO MORE.

HARRY SPENCER has somehow found favor in the captious eyes of Mrs. Andrews. It may be because her daughter has communicated certain discoveries, or beliefs, respecting the mystery of his birth which have changed her opinion. At all events, she has discovered that business demands her presence elsewhere, and hopes that the young people will excuse her.

They excuse her very readily, and seem quite capable of passing an hour pleasantly by their own two sweet selves.

"To think of that man having visited me! And of his even daring to make love to me!" she said, with some fierceness of tone.

"And of his double-dealing with me; so fair to my face, and yet so treacherous."

"What a queer vein of talk we have drifted into. I scarcely know how. Let us change the subject. Play something, Mr. Spencer." And starting up she opened the piano, turning a very rosy face away from his eyes.

"What shall it be?" he asked.

"Oh, what you will."

"Then we will go back to our old lesson of 'Love Waits.' And you shall sing it with me this time."

"Always that old lesson," poutingly.

He smiled and struck the piano, playing a soft prelude to the air.

He sung the first verse over, she remaining silent.

"But I thought you were going to join me?"

"I wanted to catch the air. I shall try the next verse with you."

His voice rung out with a full melody, now softened and enriched by her sweet tones, till the whole room thrilled with music.

"She is as winsome as the summer rose,

Ah! false was he that painted love's eyes blind!
The stars are paled when those bright orbs un-
close,

Love waits no more when love's soft heart
grows kind.

"Love waits no more!" The room rung and vibrated with the soft refrain. His eyes met hers with a look that seemed to say that love no more was blind.

He rose suddenly, took her hand, and led her to the sofa.

"Love waits no more," he repeated, his voice full of a thrilling earnestness that was instinct with music to her ears. "It has waited till the clouds should pass away and the sun should rise. One cloud still remains, dear Helen, but my love can wait no longer the dear assurance that it is not given in vain."

"There is no cloud between you and me," she said, laying her soft hand confidently in his.

"What shall I understand by this?" he cried passionately, their faces so near that her flowing hair brushed his cheek. "I have not hoped and trusted in vain? My love has met its true response in your heart?"

"Love need wait no more," was her smiling answer, as she turned her face half away to hide a rosy blush.

"Ah! that divine old lesson!" he exclaimed warmly, his arm gliding around her waist, and drawing her closer to his side. "Helen, dear Helen! you have made me so supremely happy to-day! Look at me, dear! I cannot bear to have your eyes turned away."

She turned her face, blushes and all, to his, so sweet and warm with love that filled its every line that it was more by unconscious attraction than by volition that their lips touched and pressed each other in young love's first long, clinging kiss.

And thus we leave them, having at last found words to speak what they had long since told each other in looks and tones—the very happiest lovers under that day's sun.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MOTHER AND SON.

At the appointed hour Harry Spencer was at the spot designated by Dick, the ladies' entrance to the Continental Hotel. He had not long to wait. His youthful friend soon hove in sight, accompanied by the detective, Jack Bounce.

"What are we to do there?" asked Harry, curiously.

"Goin' to call on a lady friend, who's sorter anxious to know *you*."

In a few minutes more they were ushered into the presence of Mrs. Milton, who sat expecting them.

Harry turned his eyes with a start of warm interest upon the sad, sweet face of the lady before him.

"Did I not see you in court yesterday?" he asked.

"Yes. I would have been there to-day had I been able. This gentleman has informed me of your fortunate escape from the conspiracy against you."

Her voice seemed to stir new chords of feeling within his breast. He grew slightly pale as he hastily sat down, his eyes fixed with an eager intensity upon her face.

She seemed no less affected by his presence. Her eyes turned inquiringly to Dick.

"Got the medal I guv ye?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied, producing it.

"Why, that is my medal!" exclaimed Harry, in surprise. "Where did *you* get it?"

"That's too long a story to be gone through now," answered Dick. "I got it. That's enough to begin on."

"May I not repeat your question?" came in trembling tones from the lady. "Where did *you* get this medal?"

"It has always been mine," confessed Harry, with kindling eyes. "I do not remember the time in which I have not had it. I clung to it through all of a hard life."

"Your life has been a hard one, then?"

"Yes. My early years were passed in the hands of a dreadful old woman, who used me brutally. Since I escaped from her I have had a desperate fight with the world. I finally found some good friends, who gave me a start in a more respectable life."

"And is that all? Does your memory go no further back?"

"Yes," answered Harry, eagerly. "I have faint memories of an earlier time. I can just recall a large stone house, with pretty grounds around it, in which I must have lived when very young. I remember, too, a tall, handsome gentleman, and a beautiful lady, dressed in blue silk."

His eyes were fixed upon her face with the earnestness of awakening recognition. She trembled, growing pale and red by turns. She could hardly keep in her chair.

"Is there anything more?" she asked, clasping the medal nervously.

"Very little," he replied. "I can just recall a fall from my mother's arms—I suppose it must have been my mother," he continued, with a questioning look at her. "There was a toy, too, of which I have a distinct recollection. It was a black figure in a box, which sprung up on touching a spring. I still remember the trouble I was in when I let it fall and broke its nose."

She could keep in no longer. The instinctive feeling she had entertained had grown assurance.

"Oh! it is he! my son! my long-lost son!" she cried, in a tone of infinite joy, rising and moving toward him with extended arms. "I felt it in my soul when I first met you."

"And I, too, mother!" he cried, with a long, eager dwelling upon the word.

He rose, too, with the same irresistible impulse which had moved her. In a moment they were in each other's arms, the mother clasping him to her heart with a warm embrace, in which all the past years of her longing love seemed to find expression.

They stood for minutes thus clasped, looking into each other's eyes, murmuring only inarticulate words.

"Come, Mr. Bounce; I guess we've 'bout worn out our welcome," said Dick.

Jack seemed of the same opinion, and followed Dick from the room, after having bidden good-by to the happy parent and child.

They were glad to be alone, and spent an hour of such communion as comes but once in any one's life. The mother's heart, closed by grief for years, opened to the new joy which had dawned upon her life, and her feeling for her new-found son was that absorption of soul into soul which alone makes a true union of two natures.

Harry, too, had so long yearned for mother's love, and had repined so bitterly over the mystery of his life, that his love bloomed out for his mother as a flower bursts open its enveloping leaves, and grows at once into perfect bloom.

During their long communion many new facts came to his recollection, each one an added proof of his identity with the lost son. Mrs. Milton, however,

asked and desired no further proof than had already come to her, her faith in and love for her son being of that perfect nature that disdains the shadow of doubt.

A knock at the door finally recalled them to recollection of the outer world. Harry opened it, admitting a young lady, who started back on observing him.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Milton," she said; "I was not aware you had company."

"You know this young gentleman, I believe?" and the mother smiled sweetly.

"Yes," answered the young lady, faintly.

"He is my son," and Mrs. Milton spoke with affecting earnestness.

"Oh! I knew it—I knew it!" cried Helen, eagerly "I felt that it must turn out so!"

"I did not think you would be so enthusiastic about it."

"But I could not help feeling a deep interest in your bereavement."

"And was that all? Was there no interest in this dear boy's bereavement?"

Helen stammered as she attempted to answer, turning away her flushed cheek.

"Ask Harry," she at length managed to say, in a very low tone.

"I am referred to you," and Mrs. Milton turned to her son.

"I have but one answer," putting his arm around Helen's waist, and kissing the lips that were turned up to him with an innocent willingness that was beautiful to behold.

"I love her, and I know that she loves me. Should she not be deeply interested in me, then, mother?"

"I know, and I love her, too, Harry," said Mrs. Milton, taking the young couple in her arms. "And I know that we three will be ever so happy, while life lasts, in each other's love."

CHAPTER XXVII.

FINALE.

AND now that we have followed our characters to the full exposure of the villains and the reuniting of the long-parted mother and son, it is but justice to the readers that we detain them no longer over the commonplace lives of completely happy or thoroughly unhappy people. It is only those whose lives are well checkered with sunshine and shade who are interesting characters in a story.

As for winding up Dick Darling's history, why, bless you, as he would say, we have taken him but to the threshold of a life that overflowed with adventures. It would need ten stories like this to tell all that Dick afterward went through in his new role of detective, and in more or less connection with his trio of official friends.

His next public appearance was as witness against the gang of counterfeiters. The evidence against them was so direct and conclusive that there was not a shadow of hope of their escape from the punishment they deserved.

The trial ended in a general conviction of the accused, their sentence running from five to fifteen years at hard labor, according to their degree of complicity with the crime.

Joe Turner was released, as it was shown that he knew nothing of the counterfeiting, being employed by Williamson in minor schemes of villainy, of which the chief was his effort to impose on Mrs. Milton with a fictitious son.

It proved that Williamson had long known the story of her bereavement, and becoming acquainted with some points of the history of Harry Spencer, had arrived at the correct conclusion, and at once attempted to manipulate it to his own purposes.

That he signally failed, and is yet expiating in prison the discovered crimes of which he had been so long guilty, we say with pleasure.

Of course there was a wedding. And Mrs. Andrews

was present in all the glory of silken resignation to her daughter's choice. And Mrs. Milton was there in all the joy of perfect contentment. And Jack Bounce was there, big and jovial as usual. And Dick Darling was present, with a wonderfully polished face, and a brand-new suit, not bought from Sol Sly. And hundreds of others were there, of the elite of the Quaker City.

And the happiest lovers under the sun were that day made one, still singing in their hearts "Love waits no more," and seeing in each other's eyes the windows to a heaven of happiness vouchsafed to few mortals on this earth.

Dick Darling has not forgotten them in their pleasant homes, but condescends to favor them with an occasional visit, in which he usually contrives to waken them up with a spice of his fresh, young spirit.

He is still Dick Darling, the sauciest, liveliest, most independent boy going, with a little of the roughness rubbed off, but not a particle of the shrewdness or self-assurance.

Dick was not without substantial reward for his valuable services in tracing the mysterious gang which had so long baffled the detectives. Jack Bounce saw that some of the Secret Service funds of the Government should flow into the capacious pockets of his new clothes. And Mrs. Milton also proved that her gratitude extended beyond thanks, so that Dick has a small fortune of his own as a result of his services.

THE END.

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